THE Soveraign and Final HAPPINESS OF MAN, WITH The Effectual Means to obtain it.

By WILLIAM BATES, *D. D.*

Prudentes & arbitri æquitatis inſtitutiones civilis juris compoſitas ediderunt, quibus civium diſſidentium lites contentioneſq; ſopirent. Quanto melius nos & rectius divinas inſtitutiones literis perſequemur, in quibus non de ſtillicidiis, aut aquis arcendis, aut de manu conſerenda, ſed de ſpe, de vita, de ſalute, de immortalitate, de Deo loquimur? *Lactan. de falſ. Relig.*

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THE PREFACE.

THE *Argument before us recommends it ſelf as from its Nature and Quality, for true Happineſs is the firſt and laſt in the order of things deſireable; the firſt for its attractive Excellence, the laſt in its conſummate Fruition; ſo upon this moſt valuable account, that it nearly concerns every Perſon. For Happineſs is not reſtrained to any peculiar rank of Men, but may equally and perpetually be poſſeſt by all that ſincerely apply themſelves to obtain it. If in the very different States of Life here, there were any uncapable of Eternal Life, or that have another Object for their laſt end, there might be ſome reaſon why they ſhould not feel their deſires inflam'd, and Spirits moved towards Celeſtial Felicity, and to juſtify their ſole Pretenſions to the things of Time, whereto their Intereſts are confin'd. But the offer of Heaven comprehends all that upon God's Terms will ac-*

cept it. The most sensible inequality that Riches, Dignity, or any other Temporal Accident makes between Men here, is so true a Nothing in comparison of Eternal Glory, that it makes no difference of one from another as to the obtaining of it.

Besides the universal respect wherein the Doctrine of Eternal Salvation concerns all Men as capable of it, 'tis also of admirable use to their various Conditions Temporal and Spiritual. For the prosperous or afflicted in the World; the Strangers to serious Religion, or the experienc'd in the Affairs of the Soul; the newly entred into a state of Grace, or the greatest Proficients, may find what is suitable to them in the consideration of it. As the quickning Influences of Heaven are appropriated to the divers Qualities of Fruits, with that discreet Operation, that the hard are soften'd, the small acquire growth and substance, the Green are colour'd and made beautiful, the harsh become pleasant, and receive their fragrancy and full maturity: Thus the virtue of the Celestial Reward is powerful to reform the obstinate in Evil, and to encourage the irresolute in Good, to produce the first Life of Holiness, and to cherish and strengthen it till it comes to perfection.

Happi-

Happineſs is the Spring and Crown of our Obedience.

I ſhall only add this, That no Argument has more exerciſed the Minds of the wiſeſt and beſt Men, than the laſt End and higheſt Good of Man: and that in the managing of this moſt neceſſary Subject, I have ſelected ſome things from their Writings, that were proper to my Deſign, which I acknowledg with that candor as if I had particularly named them.

ERRATA.

ERRATA.

PAge 34. *Line* 24. *for* that becauſe he was debaſed, *read* becauſe he that was debaſed. *P.* 97. *l.* 17. *f.* is diſcovered, when 'tis clear and entire, *r.* is diſcovered, firſt when 'tis clear and entire. *P.* 203. *l.* 7. *f.* The Heart fill'd, *r.* Moreover, the Heart fill'd. *P.* 206. *l.* 17. *f.* that reflecting upon his Birth-day, and the Age of his Life, *r.* that on his Birth-day reflecting upon the Age of his Life. *P.* 233. *l.* 29. *f.* warn the Heart, *r.* warm the Heart. *P.* 238. *l.* 13. *f.* as it muſt ſo be, *r.* as it muſt be ſo. *P.* 239. *l.* 18. *f.* that avoid the one, *r.* that to avoid the one. *P.* 247. *l.* 8. *f.* that Blood of Vipers, *r.* that Brood of Vipers.

CHAP. I.

The generality of Men purſue a falſe Happineſs. The cauſes of their miſtake. Rules to direct in the ſearch after the bleſſed End of Man. The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Creator, the frame of Man's Nature, and the Holy Scriptures diſcover it. The things of the World are defective, in all the eſſential Conditions requiſite to Man's Felicity. God alone who is a ſpiritual infinite eternal Good, can make him perfectly bleſſed.

HAT the Inclination to Happineſs is as univerſal as the Human Nature, we have the cleareſt teſtimony from the experience of all Men. This inclination is neither cold nor barren, but vigorouſly exerts it ſelf in motions of flight, and averſation from what is apprehended as Evil, and in the purſuit of what is conceived under the appearance of Good. From hence proceeds the unwearied Induſtry of Men in uſing

means to accompliſh their general End. Some waſte their Time and Strength in an eager purſuit of ſenſual Pleaſures, and Riches, and Dignities; Others in acquiring the more valuable Treaſures of Knowledg, or in purchaſing an honourable Reputation, as if the obtaining of theſe things were the cure of their diſtempered Deſires. But the concurrence of all particular Goods that inrich the Soul within the Sphere of Nature, or that preſerve and delight the Body, cannot afford true Content. The Heart ſtill remains empty, and languiſhes for Satisfaction. 'Tis therefore a juſt cauſe of wonder, that an intelligent Creature finding the product of all his Diligence unanſwerable to his Hopes, ſhould vainly ſeek for Happineſs where 'tis not to be found; and after innumerable diſappointments fly at an impoſſibility. An Error in the firſt enquiry might have ſome colour of excuſe, but that having been ſo often deceived with painted Grapes for the Fruits of Paradiſe, Men ſhould ſtill ſeek for ſubſtantial Bleſſedneſs to fill the Soul, in vain ſhows that can only feed the Eye, is Madneſs exceeding all Admiration. What powerful charm obſtructs their true

true judging of things? What Spirit of Error poſſeſs them? The only Account that can be given of it is this: Man being fallen from the Holineſs and Perfection of his Original State, the Affections are vitiouſly inclined to ſenſible things, and the fumes ariſing from carnal Luſts cloud and overſhade the Mind, and hinder its clear diſcovery of that univerſal comprehenſive Good in whoſe Fruition true Happineſs conſiſts, therefore he earneſtly applies himſelf to pleaſe the lower Faculties, allur'd by preſent Delights, and the facility of obtaining them.

And from hence we may underſtand, that the only way of their recovery is by clearing the Mind from Ignorance and Folly, that it may diſcern the ſole proper object of the rational Appetite in its true Beauty and Goodneſs, and by that ſight the Will may feel its raviſhing Power, and be drawn to a free and firm choice of it. And that the Soul may not faint under the apprehenſion of inſuperable difficulties interpoſing between it and the obtaining of its Happineſs, and therefore content it ſelf with eaſy Vanities, to propound ſuch means that ſincerely uſed will be

effectual, and offer it that aſſiſtance that will make it finally victorious over all oppoſition.

Thus the two leading Faculties being turn'd from the Creature to God, the inferior Wheels will follow their motion, and the Converſation be intirely chang'd. In order to this happy work the following Diſcourſes were compoſed; wherein are repreſented thoſe reaſons from the Dignity, Capacity, and Immortality of Man's Soul, and from the eſſential conditions of his Felicity; that impartially conſidered by the Men of the World, who prefer Earth before Heaven, will diſcover the vanity of their Deſigns, and check the fury of their Proſecutions, and turn their Aims and endeavours to that that is infinitely more worthy of them. But the real effecting this belongs ſolely to his Divine Power, who purchaſed Heaven for us.

O thou Sun and Life of Souls, ſhed abroad thy Light and Vital Heat, the belief of the Truth of unſeen things, and the love of their ſuperlative Goodneſs in the Minds and Hearts of Men, that they may not frame to themſelves an imaginary Happineſs in the injoyments

ments of this periſhing Life, but with that zeal and vigour in their Affections and Actions ſeek after the real Bleſſedneſs of the future Life, as becomes an Object ſo glorious and eternal.

In treating of this Subject, our firſt inquiry is, What is the bleſſed End for which Man was created? This we may clearly diſcover; by conſidering three things.

1. The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Creator, who made all things in order to ſome End worthy his Perfections.

2. The Human Nature in its higheſt Faculties, and their utmoſt Capacities.

3. The Revelation of it in God's Word. Natural Light gives a real ſignification of God's Intention by the two firſt: but the moſt clear and full is in the Holy Scriptures.

I will treat of them in their order.

Firſt, The working of God is always with ſome deſign of High Providence. He did not create the World and Man by chance, nor as a Seal impreſſes its Figure without knowing what is ſtampt. But he works always by Counſel and Election, knowing what he does, and for what End. I.

Now the laſt Period wherein all his Works determine, is his own Glory, that being the chiefeſt Good. He made great variety of Creatures, and bountiful Proviſions for their Happineſs, ultimately for his own Pleaſure. According to his Wiſdom and moſt free Goodneſs, he was pleaſed that the World ſhould not only be filled with material and ſenſitive Beings, that objectively glorify him, by the reflex of the Divine Perfections appearing in them, but to frame a higher rank of Creatures, wherein the Image of his Excellencies was more conſpicuous, and that might actively glorify him, by underſtanding and magnifying, by loving and obeying Him. And as the ſeveral kinds of things have degrees of Excellency, they are ſubordinate in their uſe: the ſimple to the compounded, the dead to the living, the lower Natures to the more Noble. By this we may take an eſtimate of their Dignity and Order. Now for whom was this vaſt Fabrick raiſed, and furniſhed with as many Miracles as Creatures? for whoſe uſe were the Lights of Heaven, and the innumerable Forms of lower Beings, Plants, and Beaſts on the Earth? If we regard their

their Operations, 'tis evident they were intended for the benefit of Man. He that underſtands himſelf, and will not forfeit the Prerogative of the reaſonable Nature, muſt readily acknowledg that the Preſervation and Comfort of Man, was their final Rule in the mind of the Creator, and their mutual uſefulneſs to one another is referred to his advantage. He is the Center of the Univerſe, wherein the ſeveral Orders of viſible Beings, as Lines drawn in a Circle, unite. And is Man alone left without an end worthy his excellent Nature? 'Tis not to be conceived without vile Thoughts, even the caſting an imputation on the Wiſdom of his Maker.

Secondly, The Frame of Man's Nature, and his Capacity is an indication of the End for which he was created. For of things made with deſign, the End is preſent in the Mind of the Agent, that directs and regulates all the parts of the Work as the prime reaſon of it. In a Ship, the Matter, the Form, the Tackling, the number and diverſity of Inſtruments, are all in order to Sail. Now Man conſiſts of two parts, an Earthly, and Spiritual: and to make a right Judgment of his laſt and happy End, we muſt II.

muſt conſider him with reſpect to the Soul that is capable of nobler Operations, and higher enjoyments than the Body is; for the true notion of Happineſs conſiſts in the perfection and ſatisfaction of his principal and moſt receptive Faculties, the Underſtanding, Will and Affections, and conſequently both in Action and Fruition with reſpect to the moſt excellent Objects. Hence it neceſſarily follows that he is made for a more worthy purpoſe than the purſuit and enjoyment of ſenſible things, that pleaſe the inferior Part, and only content the natural Appetites. To make this evident 'tis requiſite to diſcover the defects and undervalues of all Worldly Things, how miſerably they fail in the eſſential conditions of Felicity that is proper to Man, and this will convincingly prove that the divine Maker, who is infinitely Wiſe and Good, endowed him with intellectual and immortal Powers, to advance and enjoy his Glory, wherein the intire Bleſſedneſs of the reaſonable Creature conſiſts.

1. Worldly Things are not perfective of his higheſt Faculties. Man is but one *degree lower than the Angels*, and carries the Image of God indelibly ingraven

graven in his Spiritual Immortal Soul; And accordingly the order of things in the viſible World is eſtabliſh'd. *Thou haſt ſet him over the Works of thy Hands, and put all things under his Feet.* By Nobility of Nature, and the condition of his ſtate, he is incomparably above them. And can inferior things make him better? can Gold be more precious by incorporating with a baſer Metal? or Light more reſplendent by mixing with Clouds and Smoak? All the *Bona adventitia*, the good things of this World, Honours, Riches, Pleaſure, cannot denominate him truly Wiſe and Holy, cannot add the leaſt intellectual or moral Good, wherein the rectitude and brighteſt excellence of Man is truely plac'd.

Nay they are conſiſtent with all thoſe ſordid Luſts, that blemiſh and defame the humane Nature, and ſink it below it ſelf. External Honour is no Character of real Deſert, and conſidered abſolutely, confers no more to Vertue than to Vice. As Varniſh in Painting ſerves only to give Luſtre and Vavacity to the Colours, whether the Deſign be regular or ill, the Picture deformed or beautiful, and makes the Beauty or Deformity

mity more viſible. Splendor of Extraction renders the good or bad qualities of a Perſon more conſpicuous. Folly ſet in high Degree is more obſerved than in a low Condition. And uſually Titles of Honour are an occaſion of abſurd Pride to ignorant Souls, that underſtand not, that Vertue incomparably excells Nobility, as the Light is more glorious and radiant where it ſprings, than where 'tis reflected. Riches are often joined with habitual Vices in the Poſſeſſors, and indifferently ſerve for bad or good uſes. The greedy purſuit of them blaſts all true worth of Spirit, and turns the Soul to Earth and Corruption. And ſenſual Pleaſures are ſo far from advancing Man, that the luxurious enjoyment of them, by the loweſt degradement makes him like the Beaſts, in all things but Innocence. In ſhort, all the admired things of the World are of ſo little value, that they debaſe and inſlave him by an overpriſing and affecting them. 'Tis his true perfection from conſciouſneſs of his native worth, and through Royality of Mind, to deſpiſe them.

2. The ſenſible World cannot give compleat ſatisfaction to Man. Felicity

is the complacence and teſt of the Soul in the enjoyment of a ſuitable Object, commenſurate to its real capacity and duration. Such an Object muſt be a Spiritual Good, * pure without Alloys, infinite and eternal. Now all things in the World are in every reſpect inſufficient to ſatisfy our Defires.

* *Beatitudo eſt bonorum omnium complexio, ſecretis omnibus malis.* Cicer.

1. They are not a convenient Good to the Soul. What proportion is there between a ſpiritual Nature and carnal Senſualities, between the divine Offſpring, and the low voluptuouſneſs of Fleſh? What are Treaſures of Gold and Pearls, but ſhining Duſt and the froth of the Sea, and can theſe enrich a Heavenly Being? What is Honour and Reputation? an inviſible imagination form'd in a few Heads: What is Praiſe, a favourable ſound from a few Mouths? And can a Fancy, a Breath be the ſolid Good of the Soul? As well may an empty Dream afford ſubſtantial Nouriſhment to the Body.

Hence the Expectation is far above the Fruition of earthly Things. Whilſt ſeen by the falſe Beams of Fancy and the Paſſions, they promiſe fair, but upon trial are found to be a meer Illuſion, that has nothing real but the bitterneſs that

that attends them. And from hence there is a perpetual generation of Deſires in the Breaſts of Men, the † end of one is the beginning of another, as Fewel increaſes the Fire. The wanting Soul becomes more ardent by failing in what it expected, and makes endleſs inquiries for matter of ſatisfaction. *Seneca* obſerved an image of this in Nature, and gives the Moral of it. || A Tortoiſe if turn'd on the Back, though it ſuffer no pain, is violent in Motion till it recovers its natural Poſture. Thus Man, though free from external Troubles, yet is in reſtleſs changes, always caſting about till he obtains the Happineſs for which he was made, that is adequate to his Capacity. *Who will ſhew us any Good?* is the voice of Mankind chaſing ſeveral Hopes, and ingaged in infinite errors in the ſearch of Felicity here below. But the confluence of all worldly things cannot quiet the ravings of their miſguided Appetites. The *Perſian* Kings with all their Royalties, and Revenues and Delights, were ſo unſatisfied, that they proclaimed a Reward to any that invented a new Pleaſure. The ſweeteſt Enjoyments are not without ſecret diſtaſtes. The moſt plea-

† *Quicquid illis congeſſeris, non finis erit cupiditatum ſed gradus.* Sen.

|| *Nullum tormentum ſentit reſupinata teſtudo, inquieta eſt tamen deſiderio naturalis ſtatus, nec aut ea deſinit niti, & quatere ſe quam in pedes conſtitit. Ergo omnibus conſtitutionis ſuæ ſenſus eſt.*

Athen.

pleaſurable Heights are infinitely diſtant from Felicity. Therefore the moſt proſperous in the World are fain to borrow the Opinions of others, who blindly admire what they never had experience of, to conceit themſelves Happy. For their real inward Sence is perfectly contrary to the vain Fancies of thoſe below them.

Nay, ſuppoſe a Man poſſeſt of all the Varieties that compound earthly Felicity, the more full the leſs ſatisfied he is: for his deſires being unquencht, when all things are ready that promiſed to appeaſe them, and no lure of Hope remaining, the diſappointment in a miſtaken Object, and deſpair of ever finding ſatisfaction here, neceſſarily involves him in a double Miſery. Of this we have the certain Teſtimony of *Solomon* himſelf, who after a curious and earneſt ſearch for Happineſs, declares that all, even the moſt valued things below, *are Vanity*, pompous Names without ſence and reality, and therefore vexation of Spirit. Now what a poor Happineſs is the World when the fulleſt poſſeſſion of it is ſo far from inriching a Man with true content, that it makes his Poverty deſperate.

Media de fonte leporum ſurgit amari aliquid, quod in ipſis floribus angat. Lucret.

2. The

2. The Things of the World are temporal, not commenſurate to the duration of the Soul. Bleſſedneſs ſignifies an unchangeable State, not a tranſient Paſſage: The Object muſt be firm as the Center, and the Fruition of it without end or interruption. The fear that ariſes from the naked poſſibility of loſing it, daſhes our Joy, how much more the certainty. Now ſuppoſe the whole World were the Portion of a Man, can he joyfully acquieſce in it? The fear, nay certainty of parting with all theſe things, are inſeparable Properties of our poſſeſſing them. Fear, upon the account of their tranſitory condition, certainty, from Death that is inevitable to all Men.

1. Fear of loſing them. Such is the inſtability of worldly Things through viciſſitudes of Times, diſaſters of Chance, decays of Nature, that we cannot be ſecure of them a day. * Honour is a caſual Happineſs, depending on the uncertain Opinions of Men that riſe and fall every Hour. *Riches are deceitful*, not only becauſe they do not ſupply our greateſt Wants, but fly from us when we think our hold is faſteſt. They are a Quick-Silver no Art can fix

* *Nec unquam placidam ſceptra quietem, certumve ſui tenuere Diem.* S. n.

fix. † Beauty is a fading Flower often blaſted, while the ſtalk remains. *All things under the Sun are Vanity.* Whatever is meaſur'd by Time, is in a continual Flux like a Torrent, one part is preſent to the Eye, becauſe another is ſwiftly paſt away. So that 'tis evident they are inſufficient to make a Man happy. For who can poſſeſs them without a juſt jealouſy leſt they ſhould ſlip away, or by violence be raviſht from him. As the Inhabitants of *Campania*, the moſt fruitful and delicious part of *Italy*, but near *Veſuvius* that always flames, or ſmoaks and ſcatters Aſhes abroad, are in frequent apprehenſions leſt a ſudden deluge of Fire ſhould break forth and devour their Palaces and Gardens, and Vineyards, and change that natural Paradiſe into a Scene of Horrour, an accidental Hell. Now the very ſuſpicion of loſing what is our Happineſs is perfectly irreconcileable to it.

† *Forma bonum fragile eſt, quantumq; accedit ad annos, Fit minor, & ſpatio carpitur illa ſuo.* Ovid.

2. There is a certainty of loſing all earthly things at Death. Other Evils may ſurpriſe us unexpected, or not come when fear'd. And this relieves Mankind in the preſent ſtate that is liable to innumerable Evils, that many

may be prevented. But the laſt evil is inevitable. Though Men are diſtinguiſht in the condition of Living, yet all are equal in the neceſſity of Dying. Human Greatneſs in every kind, Nobility, Riches, Empires cannot protect from the ſovereign and ſuddain hand of Death that overthrows all. The expreſſions of Scripture concerning the frailty of Man are often preciſely and literally veriſied; *He is like Graſs, in the Morning it flouriſheth and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth.*

Now ſuppoſe the World conſtant and faithful to you till the laſt hour of your Lives, will it not fail you then? And can that be the Happineſs of a Man that attends him for a time and leaves him for ever? The moſt conſpicuous difference of Men in this World is that of the Victorious over the Vanquiſht proſtrate at his Feet. But Death makes them equal. Then the wretched Captive ſhall upbraid the proud Conqueror, *Art thou become weak as we? art thou become like us?* 'Tis no wonder then that the wiſe Preacher deſpiſes all the States of the preſent Life as Vanity. For the Fabric cannot be more ſolid than the Foundation, nor the Accident more real

al than the Being on which it depends. On every ſide Death is in our view, and the Shadow of it approaching darkens our brighteſt Days. 'Tis no wonder then that he *equals the Fool with the Wiſe*. For all that Wiſdom that is confin'd to mortal things dies with them. Nay he confounds Man with the Beaſt. *One thing befals them: as the one dieth ſo dieth the other, yea they have all one Breath, ſo that Man has no preeminence above them.* While we regard him only with the Eye of Sence, what ſhall we ſee in his Life, but Folly mixt with Anxieties and Cares? and what in his Death, but waſted Spirits, the Springs of Motion diſordered, and at laſt the living Frame diſſolved into the Earth from whence it came?

But if we conſider the Soul, that carries in it the clear marks of its Original from God; by the ſame reaſon that every thing ſhall be reunited to its Principle, *that ſhall return to God that gave it*, and remain for ever. The Felicity therefore to which it naturally aſpires, muſt be parallel to its duration. From theſe Conſiderations 'tis above all doubt that Man was deſigned by his Maker for a higher End than

the enjoyment of the preſent World.

2. The conſummate Happineſs of Man is in his Communion with God. For God is a Spiritual Good ſuitable to the Nature of his better and divine part, and communicates Himſelf to the Spiritual Faculties, the Underſtanding and Will, the principles of Man's eminent Operations, and moſt capable of enjoying Felicity: God is an infinite Good, and can ſo fully appeaſe all the rational Appetites, that nothing is wanting to his entire Bleſſedneſs. God is an unchangeable Good, not to be loſt with this Life, but may be ſecurely enjoyed to Eternity. In the Knowledg and Love, in the Imitation and Enjoyment of his Excellencies, the higheſt elevation, and compleat ſatisfaction of the rational Nature conſiſts. As Man by applying himſelf to unworthy things is degraded into a lower Order, and his Thoughts and Affections that are Spiritual in reſpect of their Principles, are Senſual and Periſhing in reſpect of their Object: ſo when the noble Faculties are exerciſed in a perfect manner on their Soveraign Good, he is advanc't to an equality of Perfection and Joy with the Angels.

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The more refined || Heathens had a glimpſe of this Happineſs, ſome ſtreaks of it run through their Philoſophy. But till God was pleaſed to reveal it, the World ſat in Darkneſs, and ſlept ſecurely in the ſhadow of Death, unconcerned for an inviſible future Felicity. 'Tis neceſſary therefore to inquire into his Word what that bleſſed State is wherein the final Happineſs of Man conſiſts.

|| *Vid.* Plat. Symp. & Phœd.

CHAP. II.

The clear Revelation of Man's final Happineſs by the Goſpel. 'Tis ſet forth by ſenſible Repreſentations to make it more intelligible. It includes an exemption from all Evils ſinful and penal. The concurrence of all poſitive Excellencies to intire 'Bleſſedneſs.' The 'Body ſhall be raiſed in Glory. The Soul ſhall be made perfect. The 'Underſtanding ſhall clearly contemplate the moſt excellent Objects, The Will be inflamed with the perfect Love of God. The higheſt Satisfaction ariſes from Union with God by Know-

ledg and Love. The full Joy of Heaven ſhall be perpetual.

'TIs the peculiar honour of the Goſpel that by it Life and Immortality are brought to Light. 'Twas not wholly concealed from Men that only ſaw the Creator in his viſible Works. 'Twas more fully diſcovered by the Law; but with incomparable more Clearneſs by the Goſpel. The Nature of it is now revealed: 'Tis a pure and holy Felicity in everlaſting Communion with the bleſſed God. The ſubject of it is the intire Man; for this End the Body ſhall be awakened out of its dead ſleep and quickned to an Immortal Life. The place is the higheſt Heavens, fram'd by the Divine Hand for the ſeat of his Majeſty, the Kingdom of his Love, wherein the glorious Communications of himſelf are to his Favourites. The cauſes of it are the infinite Mercy of God, and the meritorious Obedience of his Son in Man's Nature. The Means whereby 'tis obtained are a lively purifying Faith that unites us to Chriſt, and entitles us to an Inheritance purchaſed by his moſt precious Blood. And to confirm our

our Hopes of this Supernatural Happineſs. Our Saviour exhibited a perfect example of this in himſelf, riſing from the Grave, crown'd with Immortality, and in the preſence of his Apoſtles aſcending to Heaven, where he ſits at the right Hand of God; the Head of the Church, from whom Glory will deſcend to his Members.

To make this ſupernatural Bleſſedneſs more eaſy and intelligible to us, the Scripture deſcribes it by ſenſible Repreſentations. For while the Soul is cloath'd with Fleſh, Fancy has ſuch a Dominion, that we can conceive of nothing but by Compariſons and Images taken from material Things. 'Tis therefore ſet forth by a *Feaſt*, and a *Kingdom*, to ſignify the Joy and Glory of that State. But to prevent all groſs conceits; it tells us that the Bodies of the Saints ſhall be ſpiritual, not capable of hunger and thirſt, nor conſequently of any refreſhment that is cauſed by the ſatisfaction of thoſe Appetites. The Objects of the moſt noble Senſes, Seeing and Hearing, the pleaſure of which is mix'd with Reaſon, and not common to the Brutes, are more frequently made uſe of to recon-

cile that glorious State to the proportion of our Minds. Thus ſometimes the Bleſſed are repreſented plac'd *on Thrones with Crowns on their Heads*; ſometimes *cloathed in White, with Palms in their Hands*; ſometimes ſinging Songs of triumph *to Him that ſits on the Throne*, and to their Saviour. But the reality of this Bleſſedneſs infinitely exceeds all thoſe faint Metaphors. Heaven is leſſened by Compariſons from earthly things. The Apoſtle who was dignifi'd with the revelation of the Succeſſes that ſhall happen to the Church till Time ſhall be no more, tells us, *It does not appear what we ſhall be in Eternity. The things that God has prepar'd for thoſe that love him*, are far more above the higheſt aſcent of our Thoughts, than the Marriage-Feaſt of a great Prince exceeds in ſplendor and magnificence the imagination of one that has always liv'd in an obſcure Village, and never ſaw any Ornaments of State, nor taſted Wine in his Life. We can think of thoſe things but according to the poverty of our Underſtandings. But ſo much we know that is able to ſweeten all the bitterneſs, and render inſipid all the ſweetneſs of this World.

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This will appear by considering that whatever is requisite to constitute the perfect Blessedness of Man, is fully enjoy'd in the Divine Presence.

1. An exemption from all evils, is the first condition of perfect Blessedness. The sentence of wise *Solon* is true in another sense than he intended,

—— Dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet.

No Man can be named happy whilst in this valley of Tears. But upon the entrance into Heaven, all those evils that by their number, variety, or weight disquiet and oppress us, are at an end,

Sin, of all Evils the most hateful, shall be abolisht; and all Temptations that surround us, and endanger our innocence, shall cease. Here the best Men lament the weakness of the flesh, and sometimes the violent assaults of spiritual Enemies. St. *Paul* himself breaks forth into a mournful Complaint, *O wretched Man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of Death?* And when harrass'd with the buffets of Satan,

tan, renews his moſt earneſt addreſſes to God to be freed from them. Here our Purity is not abſolute, we muſt be always cleanſing our ſelves from the reliques of that deep defilement that cleaves to our nature. Here our peace is preſerv'd with the Sword in our hand, by a continual Warfare againſt Satan and the World. But in Heaven no ignorance darkens the Mind, no paſſions rebel againſt the ſanctified Will, no inherent pollution remains. The Church is *without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.* And all Temptations *that war againſt the Soul,* ſhall then ceaſe. The Tempter was caſt out of Heaven, and none of his poiſon'd Arrows can reach that Purified Company. *Glorious Liberty!* here ardently deſir'd, but fully enjoyed by the Sons of God above.

And as Sin, ſo all the penal conſequences of it are quite taken away. The preſent Life is an incurable diſeaſe, and ſometimes attended with that ſharp ſenſe, that Death is deſir'd as a remedy, and accepted as a benefit. And though the Saints have reviving Cordials, yet their joys are mixt with ſorrows, nay, cauſed by ſorrows. The tears of Repentance

pentance are their ſweeteſt refreſhment. Here the *living Stones* are cut and wounded, and made fit by Sufferings for a Temple unto God in the *New Jeruſalem*. But, as in the building of *Solomon's* Temple, the noiſe of a Hammer was not heard, for all the parts were fram'd before with that exact deſign and correſpondence, that they firmly combin'd together. They were hew'n in another place, and nothing remain'd but the putting them one upon another in the Temple; and then, as ſacred, they were inviolable. So God, *the wiſe Architect*, having prepar'd the Saints here by many cutting Afflictions, places them in the *Eternal Building*, where no voice of Sorrow is heard. Of the innumerable Company above, is there any Eye that weeps, any Breaſt that ſighs, any Tongue that complains, or appearance of Grief? The Heavenly State is called *Life*, as only worthy of that Title. There is no infirmity of Body, no Poverty, no Diſgrace, no Treachery of Friends, no Perſecution of Enemies. *There is no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying, nor ſhall there be any more Pain: for former things are paſt away.* God *will wipe away all Tears from* Rev. 21. 4.

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the Eyes of his People. Their Salvation is compleat in all degrees. Pure Joy is the Priviledg of Heaven, unmixed Sorrows the puniſhment of Hell.

A concurrence of all poſitive Excellencies is requiſite to Bleſſedneſs. And theſe are to be conſidered with reſpect to the entire Man.

1. The Body ſhall be awak'd out of its dead ſleep, and quickned into a glorious immortal Life. The Soul and Body are the eſſential parts of Man; and though the inequality be great in their operations that reſpect Holineſs, yet their concourſe is neceſſary. Good Actions are deſign'd by the Counſel and Reſolution of the Spirit, but perform'd by the Miniſtry of the Fleſh. Every Grace expreſſes it ſelf in viſible actions by the Body. In the ſorrows of Repentance it ſupplies tears, in Faſtings its appetites are reſtrain'd, in Thankſgivings the Tongue breaks forth into the joyful praiſes of God. All the victories over ſenſible pleaſure and pain are obtain'd by the Soul in conjunction with the Body. Now 'tis moſt becoming the Divine Goodneſs not to deal ſo differently, that the Soul ſhould be everlaſtingly happy, and the Body loſt in forget-

forgetfulneſs; the one glorified in Heaven, the other remain in the duſt. From their firſt ſetting out in the World to the Grave they ran the ſame Race, and ſhall enjoy the ſame Reward. Here the Body is the Conſort of the Soul in obedience and ſufferings, hereafter in fruition. When the Crown of Purity, or Palm of Martyrdom ſhall be given by the great Judg in the view of all, they ſhall both partake in the honour. Of this we have an earneſt in the Reſurrection of Chriſt in his true Body, who *is the firſt fruits of them that ſleep.* 1 Cor. 15. *He ſhall change our vile Bodies, that they may be faſhioned like to his glorious Body,* Phil. 3. 1. *according to the working of his Power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* A ſubſtantial unfading Glory will ſhine in them infinitely above the periſhing Pride of this World, that is but in appearance, like the falſe colours painted on the feathers of a Dove by reflection of the Light, which preſently vaniſh, when it changeth its poſture, or the Light is withdrawn. Indeed what can be more glorious than to be conform'd to the Humanity of Chriſt, the ſeat of all Beauty and Perfection. This Conformity ſhall be the work of his own

own hands. And when Omnipotence interpoſes, nothing is difficult. The raiſing the Body to an unchangeable ſtate of Glory, is as eaſy to the Divine Power, as the forming it at firſt in the Womb. As the Sun labours no more in the Mines in the forming Gold and Silver, the moſt precious and durable Metals, than in the production of a poor ſhort-liv'd Flower.

II. The Soul ſhall have perfection and ſatisfaction in all its Faculties.

1. The Underſtanding ſhall clearly ſee the moſt excellent Objects. *Now we know but in part.* The naked beauty of Divine Things is vail'd, and of impoſſible diſcovery. And the weakneſs of the mind is not proportionable to their dazling brightneſs. But when that which is perfect is come, *then that which is in part ſhall be done away.* In that enlightned ſtate, the glorious manifeſtation of the objects ſhall as much exceed the cleareſt revealing of them here, as the Sun in its full luſtre, one beam of Light ſtrain'd through a crevice in the Wall. And the Underſtanding ſhall be prepar'd to take a full view of them. Therefore the Apoſtle compares the ſeveral Periods of the Church in reſpect

1 Cor. 13.

ſpect of the degrees of Knowledg, to the ſeveral Ages of this Life. *When I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child: but when I became a Man, I put away childiſh things.* In Children the organs, either from an exceſs of moiſture, or their ſmalneſs, are indiſpoſed for the vigorous exerciſe of the Mind: ſome ſtrictures of Reaſon appear, a preſaging ſign what will be, but mixt with much obſcurity. But when the organs are come to their juſt proportion and temperament, the Soul diſplays its ſtrength and activity.

All things of a ſupernatural order ſhall then be clearly diſcovered. The contrivance of our Salvation, the ways of conducting us to Bleſſedneſs, which are objects of a ſublime nature, will afford an exquiſite pleaſure to the Underſtanding. All the ſecrets of our Redemption ſhall be unſealed. *The great Myſtery of Godlineſs*, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, and his according Juſtice with Mercy, ſhall then be apparent. The Divine Counſels in governing the World, are now only viſible in their wonderful effects either of Mercy or of Juſtice, and thoſe moſt

moſt dreadful; but the Reaſons of them are paſt finding out. But what our Saviour ſaid to *Peter*, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but ſhalt know hereafter*, is applicable to theſe impenetrable diſpenſations. All the original Fountains of Wiſdom, as clear as deep, ſhall then be opened. We ſhall then ſee the beauty of Providence in diſpoſing temporal things in order to our eternal felicity. We now ſee as it were the rough part, and Knots of that curious Embroidery: but then the whole Work ſhall be unfolded, the ſweetneſs of the Colours, and proportion of the Figures appear. There we ſhall be able to expound the perplexing Riddle, *How out of the Eater came meat, and out of the Strong came ſweetneſs. For we ſhall know as we are known.*

We ſhall ſee God. Our Saviour tells us, *This is Life Eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* The beginning and perfection of our Happineſs conſiſts in this knowledg. The Deity is ſpiritual and inviſible to the Eye of the Body, infinite and incomprehenſible to the Soul. But we ſhall then ſo clearly underſtand the *Divine Perfections*, that our preſent know-

knowledg compar'd to that, is but as the ſeeing a dark reſemblance in a Glaſs, to the clear view of a Perſon in the native beauty of his Face. God is moſt glorioufly preſent in Heaven. For according to the degrees of excellence in the Work, ſuch are the impreſſions and diſcoveries of the Virtues of the Cauſe. Now all ſenſible things in the low order of Nature, are but weak reſultances from his Perfections, in compariſon of their illuſtrious Effects in the Divine World. The Glories of the Place, and of the Inhabitants, the Angels and Saints, clearly expreſs his Majeſty, Goodneſs and Power. But in a tranſcendent manner he exhibits himſelf in the glorified Mediator. He is ſtiled *the brightneſs of the Father's Glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon*; not only for his equal Perfections in reſpect of the unity of their Nature, but to ſignify that God in the Perſon of the incarnate Mediator is ſo fully repreſented to us, that by the ſight of him we ſee God himſelf in his unchangeable Excellencies. This appears by the following words, that *having purged us from our ſins, he ſate down on the right-hand of the Majeſty on high*; for they reſpect the

Son of God as united to the humane Nature, in which he perform'd the Office of the Prieſthood, and took poſſeſſion of his glorious Kingdom. During his humble ſtate, the Divine Vertues, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Holineſs, Power, were ſo viſible in his Perſon, Life, Revelations, and miraculous Works, that when *Philip* ſo long'd for the ſight of the Father as the only conſummate Bleſſedneſs, *Shew us the Father, and it ſuffices*; He told him, *He that has ſeen me, has ſeen the Father alſo.* But how brightly do they appear in his triumphant Exaltation. 'Twas his Prayer on Earth; *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory.* Ineſtimable Felicity! whether we conſider him in the reſpect of an Object, that incomparably tranſcends all the created Glory of Heaven, or in the relation of our Head, on a double account; partly that becauſe he was debaſed into the form of a Servant, and ſuffered all Indignities and Cruelties of Sinners for us, has received the Recompence of his Meritorious Sufferings, the triumph of his Victory, *being glorified with the Father with the Glory he had before the World*

World was; and partly becauſe every Member ſhall be conformed to him in his Glory; *we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*. And all Felicity and Glory is compriz'd in that Promiſe. The ſight of the Face of *Moſes* when radiant, had no transforming efficacy; for the light of it was not in him as its ſource, but by derivation. But God is Light *eſſentially*, and the ſight of his Perfections will be productive of his *Likeneſs* in us, ſo far as it may be in a reſtrained ſubject. When our Saviour was upon the *holy Mount*, and one vaniſhing Beam of Glory appear'd in his *Transfiguration*, *Peter* was ſo tranſported at the ſight, that he forgot the World and himſelf. How raviſhing then will the ſight of him be in his triumphant Majeſty, when we ſhall be transfigured our ſelves?

2. As they ſhall behold God's Face, know his moſt amiable Excellencies; ſo they ſhall love him as perfectly as they know him. To the illuſtrations of the Mind, there are correſpondent impreſſions on the Heart. In the preſent ſtate our Love is imperfect, and as Fire out of its ſphere, dies away, by our neglect to feed it with proper materials,

enamouring conſiderations of God. But 'tis not ſo in Heaven: there the Divine Sun attracts every Eye with the light of its beauty, and inflames every Heart with the heat of his Love. The continual Preſence of God is in different reſpects the Cauſe and Effect of our Love to him. For there is no more powerful Attractive to love him, than to ſee him; And Love keeps the thoughts undivided from him. *God is Love*, and will kindle in us a pure Affection that Eternity ſhall never leſſen.

Our Affections that are now ſcattered on many things, wherein ſome ſmall Reflections of his Goodneſs appear, ſhall join in one full Current in Heaven, where *God is all in all.* We ſhall then underſtand the riches of his Love, that God who is infinitely happy in himſelf, ſhould make Man for ſuch a Glory, and ſuch a Glory for Man. And that when for his Rebellion he was juſtly expell'd from Paradiſe, and under a ſentence of Eternal Death, God ſhould pleaſe to reſtore him to his Favour, and give him a better ſtate than was forfeited. We ſhall then underſtand our infinite Obligations to the Son of God, who deſcended from the Heaven of Heavens to

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our Earth; and which is more, from the Majeſty wherein he there raign'd, from the Glory wherein he was viſible to the Angelical Minds, and became Man for Men, Redemption for the Loſt, to purchaſe Immortal Life for thoſe who were dead to that bleſſed Life. In ſhort, then God will expreſs his Love to us in the higheſt degrees that a finite Creature is capable to receive from Love it ſelf, and we ſhall love him with all the ſtrength of our glorified powers.

3. Compleat ſatisfaction flows from union with God by Knowledg and Love. *In his Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at his Right-hand are Pleaſures for ever.* The Cauſes and Excellencies of the Heavenly Life are in thoſe words expreſt. The Cauſes are the influxive Preſence of God, the revelation of his attractive Perfections, the beholding his Face, the declaration of his peculiar Favour. This our bleſſed Lord himſelf had a reſpect to, as the compleat Reward of his Sufferings: *Thou ſhalt make me full of Joy with thy Countenance.* And his *Right-Hand*, his Bounty that diſpenſes, and Power that ſecures that Felicity. The Excellencies of this ſtate

are fulneſs of Joy, and that without diminution, or end.

When the Soul opens its eyes to the clear diſcoveries of the firſt Truth, and its breaſt to the dear and intimate imbraces of the Supream Good, beyond which nothing remains to be known, nothing to be enjoy'd, what a deluge of the pureſt Pleaſures will overflow it? We cannot aſcend in our thoughts ſo high, as to conceive the exceſs of Joy that attends thoſe operations of the glorified Soul upon its proper object. But ſomething we may conjecture.

Thoſe who are poſſeſt with a noble Paſſion for Knowledg, how do they deſpiſe all lower Pleaſures in compariſon of it? How do they forget themſelves, neglect the Body, and retire into the Mind, the higheſt part of Man, and neareſt to God? The bare apprehenſion of ſuch things that by their internal nature have no attractive influence upon the Affections, is pleaſant to the Underſtanding. As the appearance of Light, though not attended with any other viſible beauties, refreſhes the Eye after long darkneſs: ſo the clear diſcovery of Truths, how abſtract ſo ever, that were before unknown, is grateful

grateful to the intellective Faculty. Thus ſome have been ſtrangely tranſported with the pleaſure of a Mathematical Demonſtration, when the evidence, not the importance of the thing was ſo raviſhing; for what is more dry and barren of delight than the ſpeculation of Figures and Numbers? *Solon* when near his end, and ſome of his Friends that viſited him were ſpeaking ſoftly of a Point of Philoſophy, by that ſound of Wiſdom was awaken'd from the ſleep of Death that was juſt ſeizing on him, and opening his eyes, and raiſing his head to give attention; being ask'd the reaſon of it? anſwered, *That when* * *I underſtand what you are diſcourſing of, I may die.* Such was his delight in Knowledg, that a little of it made his Agony inſenſible. But here are many Imperfections that leſſen this intellectual Pleaſure, which ſhall ceaſe in Heaven. Here the acquiſition of Knowledg is often with the expence of Health: the flower of the Spirits, neceſſary for Natural Operations, is waſted by intenſe thoughts. How often are the Learned ſickly? As the Flint when 'tis ſtruck, gives not a ſpark without conſuming it ſelf; So Knowledg is obtain'd

* *Ut cum iſtud quicquid eſt de quo diſputatis percepero, moriar.* Val. Max.

tain'd by Studies that waſt our faint ſenſitive faculties. But then our Knowledg ſhall be a free emanation from the ſpring of Truth, without our labour and pains. Here we learn by circuit, and diſcern by comparing things; our Ignorance is diſpell'd by a gradual ſucceſſion of Light: But then Univerſal Knowledg ſhall be infuſed in a moment. Here after all our labour and toyl, how little Knowledg do we gain? Every Queſtion is a Labyrinth out of which the nimbleſt and moſt ſearching Minds cannot extricate themſelves. How many ſpecious Errors impoſe upon our Underſtandings? We look on things by falſe Lights, through deceiving Spectacles: But then our Knowledg ſhall be certain and compleat. There is no forbidden Tree in the Celeſtial Paradiſe, as no inordinate Affection. But ſuppoſe that all things in the compaſs of the World were known, yet ſtill there would be emptineſs and anguiſh in the Mind: for the moſt comprehenſive knowledg of things that are inſufficient to make us happy, cannot afford true Satisfaction. But then we ſhall ſee God in all his Excellencies, the ſupream Object and End, the only Felicity of the

the Soul. How will the ſight of his Glory perſonally ſhining in our Redeemer, in the firſt moment quench our extream thirſt, and fill us with joy and admiration? 'Tis not as the naked conception of Treaſures, that only makes rich in *ideas*, but that Divine ſight gives a real Intereſt in him. The Angels are ſo raviſh'd with the Beauties and Wonders of his Face, that they never divert a moment from the contemplation of it.

2. The pure Love of the Saints to God is then fully ſatisfied. Love conſidered as an affection of Friendſhip is always attended with two deſires; to be aſſured of Reciprocal Love, and to enjoy the Converſation of the Perſon beloved, the teſtimony of his eſteem and good-will. This kind of ‖ affection ſeems to be inconſiſtent with that infinite diſtance that is between God and the Creature. But though 'tis diſproportionable to the Divine Majeſty, 'tis proportionable to his Goodneſs. Accordingly our Saviour promiſes, *He that loves me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifeſt my ſelf unto him.* And to confirm our belief of this aſtoniſhing Condeſcention, repeats it,

‖ *Ariſtot.*

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If a Man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him. In the preſent ſtate, the ſigns of God's ſpecial Favour are exhibited to his Friends. Now he beſtows on them the honour of being his Sons, the Graces and Comforts of his Spirit, the precious Earneſts of his Love, *and Seal of their Redemption.* But in eminency of degrees, the effects of his Love are incomparably more glorious in Heaven. Here the Saints are adopted, there crown'd. There he opens all the bright Treaſures of his Wiſdom, the Riches of his Goodneſs, the Beauties of his Holineſs, the Glories of his Power, and by the intimate application of his Preſence makes his Love moſt ſenſible to them. O the mutual delights between God and glorified Souls! God looks on them with an engaged Eye, as his own by many dear titles, and is well pleaſed in his own Goodneſs to them, and raviſh'd with the Reflex of his own Excellencies ſhining in them. *As the Bridegroom rejoyces over the Bride,* ('tis the language of Divine Love) *ſo their God rejoyces over them.* And what a bleſſed Reſt do they find in the compleat fruition of their Beloved? All

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their desires quietly expire in his Bosom. What triumphs of Joy follow? Can we frame a fuller Conception of Happiness than to be perfectly loved by infinite Goodness, and perfectly to love him?

3. The supream Joy of the Saints is for the Felicity and Glory of God himself. For as the holy Soul feels no more powerful motive to love God, than because he is most worthy of it, as he is God, a Being of infinite Excellencies, and therefore to be loved above the dearest Persons and Things, even it self; so the highest Joy it partakes of is from this consideration, that God is infinitely blessed and glorious. For in this the supream desire of love is accomplish'd, that the most beloved Object is perfectly honour'd and pleased In Heaven the Love of the Saints to God is in its highest Perfection, and they see his Glory in the most perfect manner, which causes a transcendent Joy to them. And this is one reason why the Saints though shining with unequal degrees of Glory, are equally content. For their most ardent Love being set on God, that he is pleased to glorify himself by such various communications of his Goodness,

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is full ſatisfaction to their deſires. Beſides, in thoſe different degrees of Glory, every one is ſo content with his own, † that there is no poſſible deſire of being but what he is.

† *Sic itaq; habebit donum aliud alio minus, ut hic quoq; donum habeat, ne velit amplius.* Aug.

4. The full joy of Heaven ſhall continue without diminution, or end. The number of Poſſeſſors cannot leſſen it. The Divine Preſence is an unwaſted Spring of Pleaſure, equally full and open to all, and abundantly ſufficient to ſatisfy the immenſity of their deſires. Envy reigns in this World, becauſe earthly things are ſo imperfect in their nature, and ſo peculiar in their poſſeſſion, that they cannot ſuffice, nor be enjoyed by all. But in Heaven none is touch'd with that low baſe paſſion: for God contains all that is precious and deſireable in the higheſt degrees of Perfection, and all partake of the influence of his univerſal Goodneſs without intercepting one another. In the Kingdom above there is no cauſe for the elder Brother to repine at the Father's Bounty to the younger, nor for the younger to ſupplant the elder, to obtain the Birth-right. The Heirs of God are all rais'd to Sovereign Glory. Every one enjoys him as entirely and fully,

as

as if ſolely his felicity. God is a *Good* as *indiviſible* as *infinite*, and not diminiſhed by the moſt liberal communications of Himſelf. We may illuſtrate this by comparing the Price of our Redemption, and the Reward. The Death of Chriſt is a univerſal benefit to all the Saints, yet 'tis ſo applied to every Believer for his perfect Redemption, as if our Saviour in all his Agonies and Sufferings had no other in his Eye and Heart; as if all his Prayers, his Tears, his Blood were offer'd up to his Father only for that Perſon. The common reſpect of it the Apoſtle declares in thoſe admirable words, that ſignify ſuch an exceſs of God's Love to us, *He that ſpared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* But to imagin that the * propriety of every Believer is thereby prejudiced, is not only falſe, but extreamly injurious to the Merit and Dignity, and to the infinite Love of Chriſt. Therefore the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *The Life which I now live in the Fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himſelf for me:* as if he were the ſole Object of Chriſt's Love, the End and Reward

* *Et totum ſe dedit univerſis, et totum ſingulis. Ac per hoc quicquid paſſione ſua Salvator præſtitit, ſicut totum ea debent univerſi, ſic ſinguli; niſi quod propè hoc plus ſingulis quàm univerſi, quod totum acceperunt ſinguli, quantum univerſi.* Salvian.

ward of his Sufferings. And this appropriating of it to himſelf, is no prejudice to the Rights of all others. St. *John* deſcribes himſelf by that truly glorious Title, *The Diſciple whom Jeſus loved.* Could he ſpeak this of himſelf without the injury and indignation of the other Diſciples? Certainly he might. For if we conſider that incomprehenſible Love of Chriſt, expreſt to them all at his laſt Supper, after *Judas* was gone forth; *As the Father hath loved me, ſo I have loved you*; we may eaſily underſtand, that every one of them might juſtly believe that he was ſingularly beloved of Chriſt. They were all received in the Heart, though (with *John*) they did not all lean on the Breaſt of their Divine Maſter. Thus in Heaven God is the univerſal Treaſure of all the Saints, and the peculiar Portion of every one, not engroſt by poſſeſſing, nor waſted by enjoying. † As by his Eſſence he equally fills the whole World, and every part of it; and by his Providence equally regards all and every partitular Creature; ſo in Heaven he diſpenſes the Riches of his Love to all, that they cannot deſire more, if every one of them, were (if I may ſo expreſs it) the only

† *Si audiat multitudo ſi-lens, non inter ſe particulatim communicant ſonos, tanquam cibos: ſed omne quod ſonat & omnibus totum eſt, & ſingulis totum.* Auguſt. in Epiſt. ad Voluſan.

only begotten of *the only begotten himſelf*, the ſole Heir of all the Merits of his Son. Every Saint may with the inflamed Spouſe break forth in that Triumph of Love; *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

Nay, the great number of the glorifi'd Saints, is ſo far from leſſening their Joy, that it unſpeakably encreaſes it. *The innumerable Company of Angels, and the General Aſſembly of the Church of the Firſt-born*, next to the happineſs of enjoying God, are a chief part of Heaven. An unfeigned ardent Affection unites that pure ſociety. Our Love is now kindled either from a relation in Nature, or a civil account, or ſome viſible Excellencies that render a Perſon worthy of our choice and friendſhip: but in Heaven the Reaſons are greater, and the degrees of Love incomparably more fervent. All Carnal Alliances and Reſpects ceaſe in that ſupernatural ſtate. The Apoſtle tells us, *If I have known Chriſt after the Fleſh, I know him ſo no more.* By the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt he was tranſported into another World, and had communion with him as an Heavenly King, without low regards to the temporal Priviledg

of

of converſing with him on Earth. The Spiritual relation is more near and permanent than the ſtricteſt band of Nature. The Saints have all relation to the ſame Heavenly Father, and to *Jeſus Chriſt* the Prince of Peace, and Head of that happy Fraternity. The principal motives of Love here are the inherent Excellencies of a Perſon. Wiſdom, Holineſs, Goodneſs, Fidelity are mighty Attractives, and produce a more worthy Affection, a more intimate Confederacy of Souls, than propinquity in Nature, or any carnal reſpects. Virtue is amiable in an old Perſon, though wrinkled and deformed: Vice is hateful in a young Perſon though beautiful. There are clearer Eyes than thoſe of Fleſh, a purer Light than what is ſenſible, a diviner Beauty than what is Corporeal, and a nobler Love than what is ſenſual. *David* declares that *all his delight was in the Excellent.* But there are allays of this Spiritual Love here. For,

1. There are reliques of Frailty in the beſt Men on Earth, ſome Blemiſhes that render them leſs amiable when diſcovered. Here their Graces are mixt with Infirmities, and but aſcending to Glory.

Glory. Accordingly our Love to them must be regular, and serene; not clouded with Error, mistaking defects for amiable qualities. But in Heaven, the Image of God is compleat, by the union of all the glorious Vertues requisite to its perfection. Every Saint there exactly agrees with the first Exemplar, is transformed according to the primitive beauty of Holiness. No *spot or wrinkle remains, nor any such thing*, that may cast the least aspect of deformity upon them.

2. In the present state the least part of the Saints Worth is visible. As the Earth is fruitful in Plants and Flowers, but its riches are in Mines of precious Metals, the veins of Marble hidden in its bosom. True Grace appears in sensible Actions, *but its Glory is Within.* * The sincerity of Aims, the purity of Affections, the impresses of the Spirit on the Heart, the interiour beauties of Holiness, are only seen by God. Besides, such is the humility of eminent Saints, that the more they abound in spiritual treasures, the less they show. As the Heavenly Bodies when in neerest conjunction with the *Sun*, and fullest of light, make the least appearance to

* *O si animum boni viri licet inspicere, ex magnifico placidoq; fulgentem! nonne veluti numinis occursu obstupefacti esse-mus?* Senec.

our ſight. But all their Excellencies ſhall then be in view. *The Glory of God ſhall be revealed in them.* And how attractive is the Divine Likeneſs to an holy Eye? How will it raviſh the Saints to behold an immortal Lovelineſs ſhining in one another? Their Love is mutual and reflexive, proportionable to the cauſe of it. An equal, conſtant Flame is preſerv'd by pure Materials. Every one is perfectly amiable, and perfectly enamour'd with all. Now can we frame a fuller conception of Happineſs, than ſuch a State of Love, wherein whatever is pleaſant in Friendſhip is in perfection, and whatever is diſtaſtful by Mens folly and weakneſs is aboliſhed? The Pſalmiſt breaks out in a Rapture, *Behold how good and pleaſant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* Love is the Beauty and Strength of Societies, the Pleaſure of Life. How excellent is the Joy of the Bleſſed, when the Prayer of Chriſt ſhall be accompliſhed, that they all may be *one*; *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us.* God is abſolutely One in his glorious Nature and Will, and therefore unalterably Happy; And their inviolable Union in Love, is a Ray

Ray of the Eſſential Unity between the ſacred Perſons. There are no Diviſions of Heart and Tongues, as in this *Babel*; but the moſt perfect and ſweeteſt Concord, an Eternal Agreement in Tempers and Inclinations. There are no envious Compariſons; for Love that affectively transforms one into another, cauſes the Glory of every Saint to redound to the Joy of all. Every one takes his ſhare in the Felicity of all, and adds to it. Such is the power of that Celeſtial Fire wherein they all burn, that it melts and mixes Souls in ſuch an entire Union, that by Complacence and an intimate Joy, the Bleſſedneſs of all is, as it were, proper to every one; as if every one were plac'd in the Hearts of all, and all in the Heart of every one. If in the Church of the firſt-born Chriſtians in the earthly *Jeruſalem*, the Band of Charity was ſo ſtrict that 'tis ſaid, the *Multitude of Believers were of one Heart, and one Soul*; How much more intimate and inſeparable is the Union of the Saints in *Jeruſalem* above, where every one loves another as himſelf? 'Tis recorded of *Alexander*, that entring with *Hepheſtion* his Favourite, into the Pavilion of *Darius* his Mother, then his Priſoner,

ſoner, ſhe bowed to the Favourite, as having a greater appearance of Majeſty, thinking him to be *Alexander*: but adviſed of her Error, ſhe humbly begg'd his Pardon: To whom the generous King replied, *You did not err, Mother, this is alſo Alexander:* Such was their Affection, that whoever was taken of them, the other was taken in him; the leſs aſcending in the greater, without degrading the greater in the leſs. This is a Copy of the holy Love of the Bleſſed; but with the ſame difference, as between the Deſcription of a Star with a Coal, and its Beauty in its proper Aſpect. And where all is Love, all is Delight. O how do they enjoy and triumph in the Happineſs of one another? With what an unimaginable Tenderneſs do they embrace? What Reciprocations of Endearments are between them? O their raviſhing Converſation, and ſweet Entercourſe! for their Preſence together in Heaven is not a ſilent Show. In the Transfiguration, *Moſes* and *Elias* talk't with Chriſt. With what excellent diſcourſes do they entertain one another? If *David* felt ſuch inward Pleaſure from the ſence of God's favours, that he could not reſtrain the expreſ-

Non errâſti Mater, nam hic Alexander *eſt.* Curt. lib. 3.

expreſſion of it, but invites the Saints, *Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and, I will tell you what he has done for my Soul.* Certainly in Heaven, the bleſſed with overflowing affections recount the Divine Benefits: the admirable Methods, whereby the Life of Grace was begun, preſerv'd and carried on in the midſt of Temptations; the continual Succeſſion of Mercies in the time of their Hopes, and the Conſummation of all in the time of their Enjoyment. How joyfully do they concur in their thankſgivings to God for the goodneſs of Creation: in making them reaſonable Creatures, capable to know, love and enjoy Him, when they might have been of the loweſt Order in the whole ſphere of Beings: for his compaſſionate care and providence over them in this World: But eſpecially for his ſovereign and ſingular Mercy in electing them to be veſſels of honour: for his powerful Grace, in reſcuing them from the cruel and ignominious bondage of Sin: for his moſt free Love, that juſtified them from all their guilt by the Death of his only Son, and glorified them with himſelf. They are never weary in this delightful exerciſe, but continually bleſs

him for his *Mercy that endures for ever.* We may judg by the Saints here, when they are in a fit diſpoſition to praiſe God, what fervours they feel in their united Praiſes of him in Heaven. The *Pſalmiſt* in an Extaſie calls to all the parts of the World to joyn with him; *The Lord reigns, let the Heavens rejoyce, and the Earth be glad; let the Sea roar, let the Fields be joyful, and all that dwell therein.* He deſires that Nature ſhould be elevated above it ſelf, that the dead parts be inſpir'd with Life, the inſenſible feel Motions of Joy, and thoſe that want a Voice break forth in praiſes, to adorn the Divine Triumph. With what Life and Alacrity will the Saints in their bleſſed Communion celebrate the Object of their Love and Praiſes? The *Seraphins* about the Throne *cryed to one another*, to expreſs their Zeal and Joy, in celebrating his Eternal Purity and Power, and the Glory of his Goodneſs. O the unſpeakable Pleaſure of this Concert! when every Soul is harmonious, and contributes his part to the full Muſick of Heaven. O could we hear but ſome *Ecclo* of thoſe Songs wherewith the Heaven of Heavens reſounds, ſome remains of thoſe Voices wherewith the

the Saints above *triumph in the Praiſes*, in the ſolemn Adoration of the King of Spirits, how would it inflame our deſires to be joyn'd with them? *Bleſſed are thoſe that are in thy Houſe, they always praiſe thee.*

2. The fulneſs of Joy in Heaven is undecaying; for the cauſes of it are always equal. And thoſe are the Beatifick Object reveal'd, and the uninterrupted Contemplation of it. Whilſt we are here below, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as to our perception and ſence, has aſcenſions and declinations, acceſſes and receſſes. And our Earth is not ſo purified, but ſome Vapors ariſe that intercept his chearful refreſhing Light. From hence there are alternate ſucceſſions of Spiritual Comforts and Sorrows, of Doubts and filial Confidence in the Saints. 'Tis a rare favour of Heaven, when an humble Believer in his whole courſe is ſo circumſpect as not to provoke God to appear diſpleaſed againſt him: When a Chriſtian (as thoſe tutelar Angels ſpoken of in the Goſpel) always beholds the face of his Heavenly Father, and converſes with him with an holy Liberty. And what a torment the *hiding of God's Face* is to a deſerted

Soul, only they know who feel it. External troubles are many times attended with more Conſolations to the Spirit, than Afflictions to Senſe; but to love God with a tranſcendent Affection, and to fear he is our Enemy, no Puniſhment exceeds, or is equal to it. As his Loving-kindneſs in their eſteem is better than Life, ſo his Diſpleaſure is worſe than Death. How do they wreſtle with God by Prayers and Tears, and offer, as it were, a holy Violence to the King of Heaven, to recover their firſt ſerenity of Mind, the loſt Peace of Heart? How paſſionately do they cry out with *Job*, in the Book of his Patience, *O that I were as in months paſt, as in the days when God preſerved me: when his Candle ſhin'd upon my head, and when by his Light I walk'd through darkneſs; As I was in the days of my youth, when the Secret of God was upon my Tabernacle.* And ſometimes God delays the revealing himſelf even to his deareſt Children; not that he does not ſee their Neceſſities, and hears their Prayers, or is ſo hard that till their Extremities he is not moved with Compaſſion, but for wiſe and holy Reaſons; Either *that they may not return to folly*, if by any preſumptu-

Job 29. 2, 3, 4.

ous

ous Sin they forfeited their Peace; or if they have been careful to pleaſe him, yet he may deprive them of Spiritual Comforts for a time, to keep them humble, and that with an obedient reſignation to his Sovereign Pleaſure they may wait for his reviving Preſence. And then Joy returns greater than before. For thus God uſually renders with intereſt what he ſuſpended only for trial. But the Saints above are for ever enlightned with the vital ſplendor, and dear regards of his Countenance, always enjoy his beamy ſmiles. A continual effuſion of Glory illuſtrates Heaven and all its bleſſed Inhabitants.

And their Contemplation of God is fixed. If the Object, though extraordinary glorious, were tranſient, or the Eye ſo weak that it could only ſee it but by glances, the heighth of Joy would not be perpetual. But the mind is prepar'd with ſupernatural vigour, to ſee the brightneſs of God's Face, and by the moſt attentive application always converſes with that bleſſed Object; ſo that the Joy of Heaven is never intermitted for a moment. They always ſee, and love, and rejoyce, and praiſe him.

'Tis

'Tis poſſible a carnal ſuſpicion may ariſe in ſome, as if the uniform perpetual viſion of the ſame Glory might loſe its perfect delightfulneſs. For thoſe who ſeek for happineſs in the vanity of the Creatures, are always deſirous of change, and have their Judgments ſo corrupted, that while they languiſh with a ſecret deſire after an unchangeable Good, yet they conceive no Good as deſireable, that is not changed.

But to correct this groſs errour of Fancy, let us a little enquire into the cauſes of Diſſatisfaction, that make the conſtant fruition of the ſame thing here to be tedious.

Senſible things are of ſuch a limited Goodneſs, that not any of them can ſupply all our preſent wants, ſo that 'tis neceſſary to leave one for another. And the moſt of them are Remedies of our diſeaſed Appetites, and if not temperately uſed, are deſtructive Evils. Eating and Drinking are to extinguiſh Hunger and Thirſt, but continued beyond juſt meaſure, become nauſeous. Beſides, the Inſufficiency of their Objects, the Senſes themſelves cannot be ſatisfied all at once. The Ear cannot attend to delightful Sounds, and the Eye

Eye be intent on beautiful Colours at the ſame time. The Satisfaction of one Senſe defeats another of enjoying its proper good; therefore the ſame Object is not conſtantly pleaſant, but the Heart is diſtemper'd from as many Cauſes, as there are deſires unaccompliſh'd. Add farther, all things under the Sun afford only a ſuperficial delight, and miſerably deceive the Expectations raiſed of them: and many times there is a mixture of ſome evil in them, that is more offenſive, than the good is delightful. The Honey is attended with a Sting, ſo that often thoſe very things we ſigh after through vehement deſire, when they are obtain'd, we ſigh for grief. Now all theſe Cauſes of diſſatisfaction ceaſe in Heaven; for * God is an infinite Good, and whatever is truly deſireable and precious, is in Him in all degrees of Perfection. And in his Preſence all the Powers of the Soul are drawn out in their moſt pleaſant exerciſe, and always enjoy their entire happineſs. The fruition of him exceeds our moſt raiſed hopes, as much as he is more glorious in Himſelf than in any borrowed Repreſentations. God will be to us incomparably *above what we can ask*

* *Vitæ nos tadium tenet timor mortis, nata omne conſilium, nec implere nos ulla felicitas poteſt. Cauſa autem eſt, quod non pervenimus ad illud bonum immenſum & inſuperabile, ubi neceſſe eſt, conſiſtat nobis voluntas noſtra, quia ultra ſummum non eſt locus.* Senec. epiſt. 74.

ask or think. The compaſs of our thoughts, the depth of our deſires are imperfect meaſures of his Perfections. And as he is a *Pure Good* in Himſelf, ſo he is prevalent over all Evil. 'Tis evident therefore that nothing can allay the Joys of Saints when they are in God's preſence.

2. Novelty is not requiſite to ingratiate every Good, and make it perfectly delightful. † God is infinitely happy, to whom no Good was ever new. 'Tis indeed the Sauce that gives a delicious taſte to inferiour things. For Men reliſh only what is eminent; and the good things of this World are ſo truly mean, that they are feign to borrow a ſhew of Greatneſs by compariſon with a worſe eſtate preceding. But an infinite Good produces always the ſame pure equal compleat Joy, becauſe it ariſes from its intrinſic perfection, that wants no Foil to commend it. The Pſalmiſt breaks forth, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?* This is no vaniſhing Rapture, but a conſtant joyful height of Affection. God, the eſſential happineſs of the Saints, is always perfectly lovely and delightful to them.

† Εἶ ἡ φύσις ἁπλὴ ἔϛι, ἡ αὐτὴ πρόξις ἡδίϛη ἐϛάι. Διὸ ὁ Θεὸς ἀιεὶ μίαν καὶ ἁπλὴν χαίρει ἡδονήν. Ariſt. Eth. l. 7. c. ult.

3. The glorified Saints in every period

riod of their happy ſtate, have as lively a perception of it as in the beginning. To make this evident, we muſt conſider that the pleaſure of Novelty ſprings from a quick ſenſe of the oppoſite terms, between our condition in the want of ſome deſired Good, and after our obtaining it. Now the Mind is more intenſe on the advantage, and more ſtrongly affected at firſt. One newly freed from the torments of a ſharp diſeaſe, feels a greater pleaſure than from a conſtant tenour of health. Thoſe who are rais'd from a low ſtate to eminent Dignity, are tranſported with their firſt change, but in tract of time the remembrance of their mean condition is ſo weakned and ſpent, that 'tis like the ſhadow of a Dream, and proportionably their Joy is leſſened. Honours like Perfumes, by cuſtom are leſs ſenſible to thoſe that carry them. But the Saints above always conſider and feel the excellent difference between their ſuffering and triumphant ſtate. They never loſe that raviſhing part of felicity, the vivid ſenſe of paſt evils. Their reflections are always as ſtrong on the Miſery from whence they were rais'd to the pitch of Happineſs, as in their

their firſt glorious Tranſlation. In what an Extaſy of wonder and pleaſure will they be, from the freſh memory of what they were, and the joyful ſenſe of what they are? *I was* (ſays the admiring Soul) *poor, blind, and naked*; but O miraculous and happy Alteration! I am full of Light, enrich'd with the Treaſures of Heaven, adorn'd with Divine Glory. I was under the tyrannous power of Satan, *but he is bruiſed under my feet.* I was ſentenc'd to an everlaſting ſeparation from the Preſence of God, my only Life and Joy; but now am poſſeſt of my ſupream Good. O how tranſporting is the compariſon of theſe wide and contrary extreams? How beautiful and pleaſant is the Day of Eternity, after ſuch a dark tempeſtuous Night? How does the remembrance of ſuch Evils produce a more lively and feeling fruition of ſuch Happineſs? How ſtrangely and mightily does *Salvation with Eternal Glory affect the Soul?* This gives a ſpritely accent to their everlaſting *Hallelujahs.* This preſerves an affectionate Heat in their Thankſgivings to their Victorious Deliverer. And thus their Happineſs is always the ſame, and always new.

Their

Their pleaſure is continued in its perfection.

Laſtly, The Bleſſedneſs of the Saints is without end. This makes Heaven to be it ſelf. There is no ſatiety of the preſent, no ſolicitude for the future. Were there a poſſibility, or the leaſt ſuſpicion of loſing that happy ſtate, it would caſt an aſperſion of bitterneſs upon all their delights: they could not enjoy one moments repoſe; but the more excellent their Happineſs is, the more ſtinging would their fear be of parting with it. *But the Inheritance reſerved in Heaven, is immortal, undefiled, and fades not away.* And the tenure of their Poſſeſſion is infinitely firm by the Divine Power, the true Support of their everlaſting Duration. *With God is the Fountain of Life.* They enjoy a better Immortality, than the Tree of Life could have preſerved in *Adam*. The Revolutions of the Heavens, and Ages, are under their Feet, and cannot in the leaſt alter or determin their Happineſs. After the paſſing of millions of Years, ſtill an entire Eternity remains of their enjoying God. O moſt deſireable State! where Bleſſedneſs and Eternity are inſeparably

ſeparably united. O joyful Harmony! when the full *Chorus* of Heaven ſhall ſing, *This God is our God for ever and ever.* This adds an infinite weight to their Glory. This redoubles their unſpeakable Joys with infinite ſweetneſs and ſecurity. They repoſe themſelves in the compleat Fruition of their Happineſs. God reigns in the Saints, and they live in him for ever.

CHAP. III.

The Mercy of God the Original Cauſe of his deſigning and preparing Heaven for his People. The Obedience of Chriſt, the meritorious Cauſe. Some Qualifications are required in thoſe that ſhall poſſeſs it. The holy Change of Man's Nature indiſpenſibly requiſite in order to his Reception into Heaven. The Reaſons of it ſpecified.

HAving ſuch a Revelation of Heaven in the Goſpel, that all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, in compariſon, are but as a Glow-worm to the Light of the Sun, with

with what inflamed deſires ſhould we ſeek, and ſtrive for that unchangeable Happineſs? In order to this we ſhall conſider the cauſes of it, and the means whereby 'tis obtain'd.

The Original moving Cauſe is the pure rich Mercy of God that prepared it for his People, and prepares them for it. The procuring Cauſe is the meritorious efficacy of Chriſt's Obedience and Sufferings. This is expreſly declared by the Apoſtle; *The wages of Sin is Death, but the gift of God is eternal Life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

I. The deſigning, the preparation, and actual beſtowing of the Heavenly Glory is from the Mercy of God. This will appear by conſidering,

1. That it is abſolutely impoſſible that a meer Creature, though perfect, ſhould deſerve any thing from God. For enjoying its being and powers of working from his Goodneſs, the product of all is entirely due to him. And the payment of a Debt acquires no Title to a Reward. He is the Proprietary and Lord of all by Creation. Hence 'tis clear that in the order of diſtributive Juſtice nothing can be challenged from him.

2. Beſides, ſuch is the infinite Perfection of God in Himſelf, that no benefit can redound to him by the ſervice of the Creature. *When you have done all, ſay you are unprofitable Servants, for we have done what we ought to do.* The neglect of our duty juſtly expoſes to puniſhment, but the performance of it deſerves no Reward, becauſe no advantage accrues to God by it. *Who hath firſt given unto him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again?* He challenges all Creatures even of the higheſt order. To ſpeak ſtrictly therefore, When God crowns the Angels with Glory, he gives what is meerly his own, and does not render what is theirs. If he ſhould leave them in their pure Nature, or deprive them of their Being, he were no loſer, nor injurious to them. For what Law binds him to enrich them with Immortal Glory, who are no ways profitable to him, or to preſerve that being they had from his unexcited Goodneſs. No Creature can give to him, therefore none can receive from him by way of valuable Conſideration.

3. There is no proportion between the beſt works of Men, and the excellency of the Reward, much leſs an equivalence.

valence. 'Twas the juſt and humble acknowledgment of *Jacob* to God, *I am leſs than the leaſt of all thy Mercies*, thoſe that common Providence diſpenſes for the ſupport and refreſhment of this temporal Life. But how much leſs than the glorious Excellencies of the ſupernatural Divine Life, wherein the Saints reign with God for ever? The moſt coſtly, the moſt difficult and hazardous Services, are equally nothing in point of Merit, with the giving but a *Cup of cold Water to a Diſciple of Chriſt*, there being no correſpondence in value between them and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apoſtle tells us, *I count the Sufferings of the preſent Life are not to be compar'd to the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* And ſuffering is more than doing. God rewards his faithful Servants not according to the dignity of their Works, but his own Liberality and Magnificence. As *Alexander* having ordered fifty Talents of Gold to be given to a Gentleman in Poverty to ſupply his want, and he ſurpris'd with that immenſe Bounty, modeſtly ſaid, ten were enough; He replied, *If fifty are too much for you to receive, ten are too little for me to give; therefore do you receive as*

Poor, I will give as a King. Thus God in the diſpenſing his Favours does not reſpect the meanneſs of our Perſons or Services, but gives to us as a God. And the cleareſt Notion of the Deity is that he is a Being infinite in all Perfections, therefore all-ſufficient and moſt willing to make his Creatures compleatly happy.

4. If a Creature perfectly Holy that never ſinn'd is uncapable to merit any thing from God, much leſs can thoſe who are born in a ſinful State, and guilty of innumerable actual Tranſgreſſions, pretend to deſerve any Reward for their Works. This were preſumption inſpir'd by prodigious Vanity. For,

1. By his moſt free Grace they are reſtored in converſion to that Spiritual Power by which they ſerve him. The *Chaos* was not a deader Lump before the Spirit of God moved on the Face of the Waters, than the beſt of Men were before the vital influences of the Spirit wrought upon them. And for this they are ſo deeply obliged to God, that if a thouſand times more for his Glory were perform'd, yet they cannot diſcharge what they owe.

2. The continuance and increaſe of the

the powerful ſupplies of Grace to the Saints, who even ſince their holy calling by many lapſes have juſtly deſerved that God ſhould withdraw his grieved Spirit, are new Obligations to Thankfulneſs: and the more Grace the leſs Merit.

3. The beſt Works of Men are imperfect, allayed with the mixtures of Infirmities, and not of full weight in the Divine Ballance. If God ſhould ſtrictly examin our Righteouſneſs, 'twill be found neither pure nor perfect in his Eyes, and without Favour and Indulgence would be rejected. And that which wants Pardon, cannot deſerve Praiſe and Glory. *He ſhews Mercy to thouſands that love him, and keep his Commandments.* If Obedience were meritorious, it were ſtrict juſtice to reward them. The Apoſtle prays for *Oneſiphorus*, who had expoſed himſelf to great danger for his love to the Goſpel, *The Lord grant he may find Mercy in that day.* The Divine Mercy gives the Crown of Life to the Faithful in the day of eternal Recompenſes.

II. The meritorious Cauſe of our obtaining Heaven, is the Obedience of Jeſus Chriſt comprehending all that he

did and ſuffered to reconcile God to us. From him as the eternal Word we have all benefits in the order of Nature, *for all things were made by him*; and for him, as the incarnate Word, all good things in the order of Grace. What we enjoy in Time, and expect in Eternity, is by him. To ſhew what influence his Mediation has to make us happy, we muſt conſider;

1. Man by his Rebellion juſtly forfeited his Happineſs, and the Law exacts preciſely the forfeiture. Pure Juſtice requires the Crime ſhould be puniſht according to its Quality, much leſs will it ſuffer the guilty to enjoy the favour of God. For Sin is not to be conſidered as an Offence and Injury to a private Perſon, but the violation of a Law, and a diſturbance in the order of Government, ſo that to preſerve the honour of governing Juſtice, an equivalent reparation was neceſſary. Till Sin was expiated by a proper Sacrifice, the Divine Goodneſs was a ſealed Spring, and its bleſſed effects reſtrain'd from the guilty Creature. Now the Son of God in our aſſumed Nature offered up himſelf a Sacrifice in our ſtead, to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice, and removed the

the Bar, that Mercy might be glorified in our Salvation. The Apoſtle gives this account of it; *We have boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt, by the Blood of Chriſt, by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us, through the Vaile, that is to ſay, his Fleſh.* Heb. 10. 19, 20.

2. Such were the moſt precious Merits of his Obedience, that it was not only ſufficient to free the guilty contaminated race of Mankind from Hell, but to purchaſe for them the Kingdom of Heaven. If we conſider his Human Nature, all Graces were born with him, as Rays with the Sun, and ſhin'd in the whole courſe of his Life in the excellence of perfection. And the dignity of his divine Perſon derived an immenſe value to all he perform'd as Mediator. One act of his Obedience was more honourable to God than all the Lives of the Saints, the Deaths of the Martyrs, and the Service of the Angels. God was more pleaſed in the Obedience of his Beloved Son, than he was provok't by the Rebellion of his Servants. Therefore, as the juſt recompence of it, he conſtituted him to be Univerſal Head of the Church, ſupream Judg of the World; inveſted him with Divine Glory, and

with Power to communicate it to his faithful Servants. *He is the Prince of Life.* In ſhort, it is as much upon the account of Chriſt's Sufferings that we are glorified, as that we are forgiven. The Wounds he received in his Body, the Characters of Ignominy, and Footſteps of Death, are the Fountains of our Glory. His Abaſement is the cauſe of our Exaltation.

If it be ſaid, this ſeems to leſſen the freeneſs of this Gift. The anſwer is clear;

This was due to Chriſt, but undeſerved by us. Beſides, the appointing his Son to be our Mediator in the way of our ranſom, was the moſt glorious work of his Goodneſs.

2. The means of our obtaining Heaven are to be conſidered. Though the Divine Goodneſs be free in its Acts, and there can be nothing in the Creature of Merit, or Inducement to prevail upon God in the nature of a cauſe, yet he requires qualifications in all thoſe who ſhall enjoy that bleſſed unchangeable Kingdom. The Apoſtle expreſly declares, *'Tis not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that ſheweth Mercy.* But we muſt diſtinguiſh the

Rom. 9. 16.

Effects

Effects of this Mercy, which are dispensed in that order the Gospel lays down. The first Mercy is the powerful calling the Sinner from his corrupt and wretched State; a second Mercy is the pardoning his Sins; the last and most eminent is the glorifying him in Heaven. Now 'tis clear that in this place, *the shewing of Mercy*, signifies the preventing Grace of God in Conversion, for in the 18*th* verse, 'tis said, God shews Mercy to *whom he will, and whom he will he hardens.* Where 'tis evident *that shewing Mercy* is oppos'd not to condemning, but *to hardning*, and consequently the intent of the Words is this, That Divine Grace overcomes the Rebellious Will, softens the stiff and stubborn Heart, and makes it pliant to Obedience. This flows from his pure good Will and Pleasure, without the least motive from the inclinations or endeavours of sinful Men. But the other Effects of God's Mercy require Conditions in the Subjects that receive them: for he pardons only penitent Believers, and glorifies none but persevering Saints.

To make this clear 'tis worthy of Observation, The Gospel has several Denominations.

nominations. 'Tis called *a Law, a Covenant, and a Teſtament.* 'Tis called *the Law of Faith, and the Law of the Spiritual Life.* As a Law it ſignifies a new Right that God has moſt freely eſtabliſht in favour of loſt Man, that commands certain Duties, and ſets before them Eternal Life as the reward of Obedience, and Eternal Death the puniſhment of Diſobedience. According to this the trial and deciſion of Mens everlaſting States ſhall be, which is the Character of a true Law. This Law of Grace, is very different from the Law of Nature, that requir'd intire innocence, and for the leaſt omiſſion, or accuſing act, paſt an irrevokable doom upon the Offender: for that ſtrictneſs and ſeverity is mollified by the Goſpel, which accepts of ſincere perſevering Obedience though imperfect; accordingly 'tis called *the Law of Liberty.* But *the Law of Faith* is unalterable, and admits of no diſpenſation from the duties required in order to our being everlaſtingly happy.

James 2.

2. The Goſpel is ſtiled *a Covenant*, and that imports a reciprocal engagement between parties for the performance of the matter contained in it.

The

The Covenant of Grace includes the promiſe of pardoning and rewarding Mercy on God's part, and the Conditions on Man's with reſpect to which 'tis to be perform'd. There is an inviolable dependence between them. He will be *our God*, to make us happy, *but we must be his People to yeild unreſerved Obedience to him. He will be our Father, and we ſhall be his Sons and Daughters*, but 'tis upon the terms of *purifying our ſelves from all pollutions of Fleſh and Spirit*, and unfeigned endeavours to *perfect Holineſs in his fear*. 'Tis aſtoniſhing Goodneſs that he is pleaſed to condeſcend to ſuch a treaty with fallen Creatures: by a voluntary promiſe he encourages them, but though moſt free in making, 'tis conditional in the performance. The conſtancy of his holy Nature obliges him to fulfil his Word, but 'tis if we do not fail on our part by careleſsneſs of our Duty A Preſumer may ſeal aſſurance to himſelf, and be deceived in this great matter, but *God will not be mocked*. If we prove falſe in the Covenant, he will be faithful, and exclude thoſe from Heaven that were neglectful of the Conditions to which it is promiſed. Heb. 9. 2 Cor.

3. The

3. The Goſpel is ſtiled *a Teſtament* ſealed in the Blood of Chriſt, confirm'd by his Death. The donation of eternal bleſſings in it is not abſolute and irreſpective, but the Heirs are admitted to the Poſſeſſion of the Inheritance according to the Will of the rich liberal and wiſe Teſtator. There can be no regular title or claim made out without performing what is required. And this *is the Will of God and Chriſt our Sanctification*, without which we cannot enjoy it.

Now from hence we may ſee the admirable agreement between theſe two Notions, that Heaven is a Gift and a Reward. 'Tis a Reward in the order of giving it, not due to the Work, but from the Bounty of the Giver. God gives Heaven to thoſe that faithfully ſerve him. But their Service was due to God, of no worth in reſpect of Heaven, ſo that Man's Work is no Merit, and God's Reward is a Gift. Our everlaſting Glory muſt be aſcribed to his moſt free Grace, as much as the pardon of our Sins.

I ſhall now proceed to conſider, what the Goſpel declares to be indiſpenſibly requiſite in order to our obtaining of Hea-

Heaven: this is compriz'd in the holy change of Man's Nature, which I will briefly unfold, and ſhew how neceſſary it is to qualify us for Celeſtial Glory.

1. This holy Change is expreſt in Scripture by the new Birth. Our Saviour with a ſolemn repeated Aſſeveration tells *Nicodemus*; *Verily, Verily, except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* Sin is natural to Man from his Conception and Birth, and infects with its contagion all his Faculties. This is fomented and cheriſht by temptations that eaſily encompaſs him. The Underſtanding is polluted with evil Principles, full of ſtrong Prejudices, and lofty Imaginations againſt the ſupernatural Myſteries of Salvation. 'Tis full of Ignorance and Folly, and from hence either rejects them as incredible, or deſpiſes them as impertinent or unprofitable. The Will is depraved and perverſe, full of unruly and unhallowed Affections. The Senſes are luxurious and rebellious. In ſhort Man, is ſo viciouſly and ſenſually inclined, ſo *alienated from the Life of God*, as if he had no diviner part within him, that ſhould aſpire to a Spiritual Bleſſedneſs, that ſhould regulate and con- John 3. 3.

controul the exceſs of the inferiour Appetites. This is the unhappy Character Satan impreſt on him in his Fall, and without renovation upon an infinite account he is uncapable of ſeeing God. This renovation conſiſts not in the change of his ſubſtance, as the Water was miraculouſly turn'd into Wine at the Marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee:* the ſame Soul with its eſſential Powers, the ſame Body with its natural Senſes, the Work of the Creator remains; but in the cleanſing of his ſtain'd nature, in the ſanctifying his Faculties that are the Springs of his Actions. The whole Man is quickned into a Divine Life, and enabled to act in conformity to it. And of this the new Birth is a convenient Illuſtration. An active Principle of Holineſs is planted in him that ſprings up into viſible Actions. The Apoſtle particularly expreſſes it in his earneſt Prayer for the *Theſſalonians*, *The very God of Peace ſanctify you wholly, and preſerve your whole Spirit, Soul and Body blameleſs till the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.* Every Faculty is renewed, and every Grace infuſed that conſtitutes the Divine Image. The Mind is renewed by Spiritual Light, to believe the Truth and Good-

Goodneſs of unſeen things promiſed, the reality and dreadfulneſs of things threatned in the Word of God. It ſees the trueſt Beauty in Holineſs, the higheſt Honour in Obedience to God, the greateſt Equity and Excellence in his Service. The Will is renewed by holy Love, a purifying Flame, and feels the attractive virtue of our bleſſed End, before all deſireable things on Earth, and determins to purſue it in the vigorous uſe of proper means. The Body is made a holy inſtrument fit for the renewed Soul. In ſhort, the natural Man becomes ſpiritual in his Perceptions, Reſolutions and Actions. *All things are become New.* There is a firm aſſent, an inviolable adherence to thoſe moſt precious Objects revealed in the Scripture, and a ſincere choſen conſtant Obedience flows from the renewed Faculties. And from hence we may diſtinguiſh between regenerating Grace, and formal Hypocriſy in ſome, and the proficiency of Nature, and power of common Grace in others. A Hypocrite in Religion is acted from without, by mercenary baſe reſpects, and his Conſcience being cauteris'd, handles ſacred things without feeling: a regenerate Per-

Perſon is moved by an internal living Principle, and performs his Duties with lively Affections. Natural Conſcience under the compulſion of Fear, may lay a reſtraint upon the outward acts of Sin, without an inward conſent to the ſanctity of the Law. Renewing Grace cleanſes the Fountain, and the current is pure. It reconciles the Affections to the moſt holy Commands. *I love thy Law becauſe 'tis pure*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt.

A moral Principle may induce one to abſtain from many Sins, and to perform many praiſe-worthy things in conformity to Reaſon. But this is neither ſanctifying nor ſaving: for it only prunes Sin as if it were a good Plant, and does not root it up; it compounds with it, and does not deſtroy it. There may be ſtill an impure indulgence to the ſecret luſtings of the Heart, notwithſtanding the reſtraint upon their Exerciſe. And many Duties may be done on lower motives, without a divine reſpect to the Commands and Glory of God.

But renewing Grace ſubjects the Soul to the whole Royalty of the Law, uniformly inclines it to expreſs Obedience to all its Precepts, becauſe they are pure,

pure, and derived from the eternal Spring of Purity. It mortifies Concupiſcence, and quickens to every good Work, from a Principle of Love to God, and in this is diſtinguiſht from the moſt refined unregenerate Morality. In ſhort, there may be a ſuperficial tincture of Religion from common Grace, a tranſient Eſteem, vaniſhing Affections, and earneſt Endeavours for a time after Spiritual Things, and yet a Perſon remain in a ſtate of unregeneracy. But renewing Grace is a permanent ſolid Principle, that makes a Man *partaker of the Divine Nature*, and elevates him above himſelf.

This holy Change is wrought by Divine Power. Our Saviour tells *Nicodemus*, *Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* The Analogy of a new Birth ſignifies, that 'tis intirely the work of the ſanctifying Spirit, that conveys a Principle of Life in order to the Functions of it. 'Tis the liviug impreſſion of God, the ſole Efficient and Exemplar of it, the Fruit and Image of the Divine Vertues. 'Tis expreſt by the *new Creature.* The production of it is attributed to God's power diſplaying it ſelf in a peculiar

excellent way, even in that preciſe manner, as in making the World. For as in the firſt Creation all things were made originally of nothing, ſo in the ſecond, the habit of Grace is infuſed into the Soul that was utterly void of it, and in which there was as little preparation for true Holineſs, as of nothing to produce this great and regular World. And although there is not only an abſolute privation of Grace, but a fierce reſiſtance againſt it, yet creating invincible Power does as infallibly and certainly produce its effect in forming the new Creature, as in making the World. From hence it appears that preventing renewing Grace is ſo intirely the Work of God; as his forming the human Body from the Duſt of Earth at firſt. But with this difference, the firſt Creation was done without any ſence in the Subject, of the efficiency of the Divine Power in producing it: but in the new Creation, Man feels the vital influence of the Spirit, applying it ſelf to all his Faculties, reforming and enabling them to act according to the quality of their nature.

And by the way we may obſerve the admirable Grace ſhewed to Man in the reno-

renovation of his corrupted Nature. In the compoſition of his Being are united a Spirit like the Angels, and a Body like terreſtrial Animals, by which he partakes of the ſpiritual and natural Life: but he has peculiar Favours conferred upon him. For, whereas his Soul ſin'd with the Angels, and his Body dies with the Beaſts, yet God is pleaſed to reſtore them by his glorious Power. An Angel after Sin never repents, and is therefore incapable of Pardon, and irrecoverably diſinherited of Heaven: a Beaſt after Death never revives: but though Man ſins and dies, yet his Soul may be renewed by Divine Grace, and his Body ſhall be raiſed in an incorruptible Glory.

Now the indiſpenſible neceſſity of this holy Change is evident from the Words of our Saviour, for he ſpeaks univerſally, *Except a Man be born again he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* He does not ſimply declare that an unregenerate Man ſhall not, but with the greateſt *Emphaſis*, cannot, to ſignify an abſolute impoſſibility of it. The *Jews* highly preſumed of the priviledg of their carnal Birth, they ſprang from the pure and noble Blood of *Abraham*,

God's Friend; they had the Seal of the Holy Covenant markt in their Fleſh: and hence it was proverbial among them, that every *Iſraelite* ſhould have a part in the World to come. But our Saviour overthrows this vain conceit, and tells them that the ſupernatural Birth entitles to the ſupernatural Inheritance. Circumciſion then, and Baptiſm now, without real Grace is an ineffectual ſign, of no avail to Salvation. In the quality of Sons, we are Heirs of God's Kingdom.

Rom. 8. 17.

Gal. 4. 7.

And that honourable Relation we have upon a double account; by Adoption and Regeneration. Divine Adoption is not a meer change of our ſtate, a naked Declaration that one ſhall be dignified with the Title of God's Son, but a holy Nature is always infuſed into the Perſon, whereby he is made like to God in his Excellencies. In this it differs from humane Adoption, that gives the Name, and Arms, the Honour and Eſtate of the Adopter to a Perſon, without conveying any of his intellectual or moral Endowments. Whom God adopts he begets to a Divine Life. Beſides, our Saviour purchaſed this high privilege for us: *God ſent his Son made of a Woman, under the Law, to redeem them*

them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons: By Union with him we receive the inveſtiture of this Dignity. *Now whoever is in Chriſt is a new Creature.* For the quickning Spirit, that is to the Soul what the Soul is to the Body, the principle of Life and Strength, of Beauty and Motion, and an active purifying Faith that is influential upon all other Graces, are the band of that vital Union: So that as all in *Adam* are univerſally corrupt by the firſt Birth, all that are in Chriſt are made holy by a new Birth. But of this I ſhall ſpeak in the next Chapter more fully, under a diſtinct Head. Briefly, the Spirit of Grace that ſanctifies, is the Spirit of Adoption that ſeals our Right to that Kingdom.

Now the reaſons why this Change muſt be in order to our obtaining of Heaven, are theſe:

1. There is an exquiſite Wiſdom ſhines in all God's works, in diſpoſing them for the ends to which they are appointed: and is it not monſtrouſly abſurd to imagin, he will admit into his Preſence and Kingdom, thoſe that are abſolutely unqualified for its Bleſſedneſs, and oppoſite to its Purity?

2. His invariable Juſtice excludes for ever all unholy Perſons from Heaven. For in the laſt Judgment God will be glorified as a Governour, in the diſtribution of Rewards with reſpect to the Obedience and Diſobedience of Men. 'Tis worthy of obſervation, that the Actions of God on the reaſonable Creatures are of two ſorts. Some proceed from his ſoveraign good Pleaſure, of which there is no motive or reaſon in the Subjects on which they are terminated. Thus by a free and inſuperable Decree (when all Mankind, lapſt and miſerable, was in his view) he choſe ſome to be *Veſſels of Mercy*, and by privileg ſeparated them from the reſt that finally periſh. Now what induc't him to place a ſingular Love on the Elect? There was nothing in them to incline his Compaſſion, being equally guilty and depraved with the reſt of the Progeny of *Adam*. This difference therefore is to be reſolved into his unaccountable and adorable Will, as the ſole cauſe of it. Thus God declares it to be his glorious Prerogative, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compaſſion on whom I will have Compaſſion.* And this is no unjuſt

acceptance of Perſons: For as a Benefactor, he may diſpenſe his own Favors as he pleaſes. A Gift from meer and arbitrary Bounty may be beſtowed on ſome, and not on others without injuſtice. But there are other actions of God for which there is an evident reaſon in Men on whom they are terminated. Thus as the ſupreme *Judg, without reſpect of Perſons*, he will judg and reward *every Man according to his Works*. The Evangelical Law (as was toucht on before) is the rule of eternal Judgment, and gives a right from the gracious Promiſe of God, to all penitent Believers in the Kingdom of Heaven, and excludes all impenitent Infidels. Divine Juſtice will illuſtriouſly appear then in diſtinguiſhing Believers from Unbelievers by their Works, the proper Fruits either of Faith or Infidelity. All the thick Clouds of Diſgraces, Calumnies, Perſecutions, that often oppreſs the moſt ſincere Chriſtians here, ſhall not then darken their Holineſs, and all the ſpecious appearances of Piety, which the moſt artificial Hypocrites make uſe of to deceive others, ſhall not conceal their Wickedneſs. And accordingly the one ſhall be abſolved and

1 Pet. 1, 17.

Rom. 2. 16.
Acts 26. 18.

glorified, the others condemned and puniſht for ever. In ſhort, without violation of his own righteous eſtabliſhment in the Goſpel, God cannot receive the unholy into his Glory.

Heb. 12. 14.

3. Beſides the Legal Bar that excludes unſanctified Perſons from the beatifick viſion of God, there is a moral incapacity. Suppoſe that Juſtice ſhould allow Omnipotence to tranſlate ſuch a Sinner to Heaven, would the Place make him happy? Can two incongruous Natures delight in one another? The happineſs of Senſe is by an impreſſion of Pleaſure from a ſuitable Object: The happineſs of intellectual Beings ariſes from an entire conformity of diſpoſitions. So that unleſs God recede from his Holineſs, which is abſolutely impoſſible, or Man be purified, and changed into his likeneſs, there can be no ſweet Communion between them. Our Saviour aſſigns this Reaſon of the neceſſity of Regeneration in order to our admiſſion into Heaven: *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is ſpirit.* According to the quality of the Principle, ſuch is what proceeds from it. The Fleſh is a corrupt Principle,

ple, and accordingly the Natural Man is wholly carnal in his propenſions, operations, and end. The Diſeaſe is turn'd into his Conſtitution. He is dead to the Spiritual Life, to the actions and enjoyments that are proper to it: Nay, there is in him a ſurviving Principle of Enmity to that Life: not only a mortal coldneſs to God, but a ſtiff averſation from him, a perpetual reſiſtance and impatience of the Divine Preſence, that would diſturb his voluptuous enjoyments. The Exerciſes of Heaven would be as the Torments of Hell to him, while in the midſt of thoſe pure Joys his inward inclinations vehemently run into the loweſt Lees of Senſuality. And therefore till this contrariety, ſo deep and predomanant in an unholy Perſon, be removed, 'tis utterly impoſſible he ſhould enjoy God with ſatisfaction. As it was neceſſary that God ſhould become like Man on Earth, to purchaſe that Felicity for him, ſo Man muſt be like God in Heaven before he can poſſeſs it. Holineſs alone prepares Men for Celeſtial Happineſs; that is againſt the corruption and above the perfection of meer Nature.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Faith in the Redeemer is required of all that will obtain Salvation. The choice of Supernatural Happineſs previous to our obtaining it. The choice muſt be ſincere, early, and conſtant. The ſincerity of the Heavenly Choice declared by its Qualities and Effects.

I Shall now proceed to conſider more particularly what is requiſite in order to our obtaining of Heaven.

1. Faith in the Redeemer is abſolutely required of all that will partake of the Salvation purchaſed by him. *God* Joh. 3. 16. *ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him, ſhould not periſh but have Eternal Life.* This is the Spirit and Subſtance of the Goſpel, therefore I will briefly unfold it. The Son of God having aſſumed the human Nature, and performed what was neceſſary for the expiation of Phil. 2. 8,9. Sin, the Father was ſo pleaſed with his Obedience, that from his loweſt State he rais'd him to Divine Glory, and gave him ſupream Authority, and all-ſufficient Power to communicate that Glory to others. Thus our Saviour declares;

declares; *Thou haſt given him* (i. e. *the Son*) *power over all Fleſh, that he ſhould give Eternal Life to as many as thou haſt given him.* And he exhorts the People, *Labour for that Meat that endures unto Eternal Life, which the Son of Man ſhall give unto you, for him hath God the Father ſealed.* Now this glorious Life is not given to all, but only to thoſe who are united to him. As *Adam* the principle of the carnal corrupt Nature, derives Guilt and Death to all his Progeny, ſo Jeſus Chriſt (who is oppoſed to him) the Head and Prince of the renewed State, communicates Life and Glory to his People. The Apoſtle expreſſes it, *As in Adam all dye*, his natural Deſcendants are involv'd in his Condemnation, *even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive:* that is, all that are ſpiritually united to him ſhall partake of his glorious Reſurrection. And St. *John* tells us, *He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son hath not Life.* The having the Son, upon which our right to Eternal Life depends, is believing in him. Faith has a principal Efficiency in receiving Chriſt, therefore 'tis expreſt by that Act; *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become*

Joh. 17. 2.

Joh. 6.

1 Cor. 15. 22.

1 Joh. 5. 12.

Joh. 1. 12.

become the Sons of God, (and conſequently Heirs of Glory) to as many *as believed on his Name.* And Chriſt is
Epheſ. 3. 17. ſaid *to dwell in our Hearts by Faith.* This is not a meer aſſent to the Doctrines of the Goſpel concerning the Dignity of his Perſon, that he is in ſo high and glorious a Relation of being the Eternal Son of God, and the infinite value of his Merits, whereby he is able to ſave all that come unto God by him, and his merciful compaſſionate Nature to embrace returning Sinners, and the excellency of the benefits purchaſed by him, but ſuch a Belief as ſways the Will and Affections to receive him upon God's terms for our Salvation. Faith is ſeated in the whole Soul, in the Mind and Heart, and accepts of Chriſt intirely as Prophet, Prieſt and King. The parts of the Mediator's Office, are inſeparably connected, and all the Effects of them are communicated to the ſame Perſons.
1 Cor. 1. *Jeſus Chriſt is made of God to Believers, Wiſdom,* to cure their Ignorance and Folly, *Righteouſneſs* to aboliſh their Guilt, *Sanctification* to renew their Natures, *and Redemption* to free them at laſt, from the Grave and bring them to Glory. From hence 'tis clear, that the Faith

Faith, which is justifying and saving, includes in its Nature, as dependance and trust in Christ as a powerful and merciful Mediator, that is able and willing to reconcile us to God, and make us for ever happy in his Favour; so a sincere resolution of Obedience and Subjection to all his holy Commands, even to the plucking out of the right Eye, and the cutting off the right hand, the parting with the most pleasing or profitable Sins. For the Promises of God that are the Rule of Faith, make an offer of Christ upon these Conditions to us: *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to* Israel *and forgiveness of Sins.* Acts 5. 31. And only *the Justified shall be glorified.* Rom. 8. Those therefore who desire a partial interest in him as a Saviour, out of absolute necessity, to escape Hell, and will not out of Love submit to him as their Prince, have not *that Faith that is unfeigned*, and gives a title to Eternal Life by the Promises of the Gospel.

2. We must chuse Heaven as our supream Happiness, and regard it as the main end of our Lives. Man fell from his Duty and Felicity by preferring sensual Pleasure before the Favour of God, and became

became guilty of the greateſt Diſobedience and Diſhonour to his Maker, and is reſtored by the holy change of his Will, the ſetting his Affections on a pure Spiritual Bleſſedneſs. This ſublimming the Will, and turning its Love and Choice from the Creatures to God, is the effect of Divine Grace, and wrought in a rational way. For Man is not moved as artificial Engines by force, nor as Brutes from neceſſity, their Faculties being determined by the outward application of Objects: he is not drawn up to Heaven by ſuch a natural impreſſion, as Steel by the Load-ſtone, nor forc'd by a violent motion as a Stone aſcends, but as an underſtanding free Agent, by the direction of the enlightned Mind, and the conſent of the Will, an elective unconſtrained Faculty. And herein the Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Equity of God's Tranſactions with Man appears. His Wiſdom, in that as he has ordered in the whole ſphere of Nature, that the active Powers of every Creature, be drawn forth into exerciſe for their preſervation, and accordingly he is pleaſed to work in and by them, ſo the Underſtanding and Will, the Principles of Operation in Man, are to deliberate and

and chooſe in order to his Happineſs. Otherwiſe the rational Faculties would be in vain. His Goodneſs and Equity, in that he ſets before them Eternal Life as the Reward of Obedience. God will be glorified by him as a Law-giver and a Benefactor, and has ordained in the Goſpel, that all who chuſe and diligently ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven ſhall infallibly obtain it, and none be deprived of it, but for their neglect. The Decree of a final ſtate of Miſery, though not in time, yet is conſequent in the order of cauſes to the obſtinate reluctancy of Sinners againſt reſtoring Grace, and the wilful forſaking their own Mercies. Therefore God vindicates the Equity of his Proceedings with Men by their own Principles, and with tender pity expoſtulates, *Why will ye dye?* The corrupt Will declining from God, and adhering to the Creature as its Happineſs, is the true cauſe of Mans ruin. This will infinitely clear the Wiſdom and Juſtice, the Purity and Goodneſs of God from all Imputation.

The choice of Heaven for our Felicity is primarily to be determined, for 'tis from the proſpect of it, that all holy Counſels derive their

their Life and Vigour. As in drawing the Picture of a Man, the firſt work is to delineate the Head, not only as the part that in dignity and eminence is above the reſt, but as it regulates the drawing of the other parts, and gives a juſt proportion and correſpondence between them, without which the whole Figure becomes diſordered and monſtrous. Thus in the moral conſideration of Man, that which is primarily to be conſidered is the Soul, and its final Felicity, as incomparably more excellent than the Body and its Pleaſures: for this will have a powerful influence upon the whole Life, directing to avoid what is inconſiſtent and impertinent, and to do what is conducive to it.

Now this being a matter of unſpeakable importance, I will firſt ſhew what the regular choice of Heaven includes, as to its Qualities and Effects. Secondly, direct how to make this Choice. Thirdly, preſent ſome powerful Motives to excite us to it.

The Qualities of this Choice are three. Firſt, it muſt be ſincere and cordial. Secondly, early, in our firſt and beſt days. Thirdly, firm and conſtant.

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1. It muſt be ſincere and cordial. The moſt eſſential and active deſire in human Nature is to Happineſs, but there being two kinds of good things preſented to the Will, that ſolicit the Affections, the pleaſures of Senſe, and ſpiritual Joys, from hence it is that that which makes Men happy is the object of Election. And although there is nothing more uniform and inviolable than the natural inclination to Happineſs, yet the great diſtinction of Mankind ariſes from this ſource, the regular or perverſe uſe of this inclination, the wiſe or miſtaking choice of Happineſs. Now the Sincerity of our Choice is diſcovered, when 'tis clear and entire, ariſing from a tranſcendent eſteem of the favour and enjoyment of God as our chief Good, and abſolutely requiſite for us. The Choice of true Happineſs, neceſſarily includes the deſpiſing and rejecting of the falſe Happineſs that ſtands in competition with it. There cannot be two reigning Principles in the Soul: for it cannot vigorouſly apply it ſelf to two Objects at the ſame time. Our Saviour has decided it, *No Man can ſerve two Maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or hold to the*

one, and deſpiſe the other: ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon. The Maſters are irreconcileable, and their commands are directly oppoſite. It was as poſſible to place upon the ſame Altar the Ark of God, and the Idol of the *Philiſtins*, as that Heaven and the World ſhould compound and take equal ſhares in our Affections. Indeed if the conceptions in the Mind are but faint and floating of the univerſal ſatisfying Goodneſs of the Object propoſed to make us happy, the Will remains in ſuſpence; but when 'tis clearly and ſtrongly repreſented, the Heart is drawn intirely to embrace it. Divine Grace by the illumination of the Underſtanding purifies and changes the depraved Will, and heals the diſtempered Affections. The wiſe Merchant that had a diſcerning Eye ſaw reaſon enough to part with all, that he might gain the *Pearl of Price*, the Grace and Glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apoſtle declares his reſolute contempt of the concurrence of all the Prerogatives either the Law or the World could afford him, that he might have an Intereſt in Chriſt, the Reconciler and Reſtorer of Man to the Favour and Fellowſhip of God. *But what things were*

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gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt; yea doubtleſs I count all things but loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledg of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I might win Chriſt. The glorious Goſpel is the brighteſt and moſt pleaſant Light that ever ſhone upon the World, a revelation of the deepeſt Wiſdom and moſt admirable Love, wherein the combination of God's holy and wonderful Counſels for our Salvation is unfolded, and accordingly St. *Paul*, with the greateſt Life of Affection ſets forth his value of it, and by full and moſt vilifying Expreſſions rejects all things in compariſon of it.

2. The Sincerity of the Heavenly Choice is diſcovered by a zealous obſervance of the means requiſite in order to it. Inanimate things incline to reſt in their Centre, the rational intend and purſue it. The bleſſed End when valued and reſpected according to its worth, excites and directs the Affections and Endeavours in that order and meaſure as is proportionable to its Excellency; and the difficulties of obtaining it. There may be a naked eſtimation, and ſome deſires of Eternal Hap-

pineſs ſimply conſidered, yet the Will remain incompleat and undetermined in its choice: for the End in conjunction with the Means is propounded to us, and the carnal Man will not conſent to the Means. He diſlikes the Holineſs of Religion, and will rather forfeit Heaven than ſubmit to ſuch ſtrict terms. Though with *Balaam*, in a fit of Devotion he ſays, *O that I might die the death of the Righteous, and that my laſt end might be like his*, yet from Indulgence to his ſenſual Inclinations, he will not live as the righteous. All his wiſhes of true Happineſs are ſoon ſtrangled by the predominant love of ſome Vanity. 'Tis ſaid of the *Iſraelites*, *they deſpiſed the pleaſant Land*, not abſolutely in it ſelf, for it was *the Glory of all Lands*, abounding with things for the ſupport and delight of Man, but conſidering its diſtance, a Wilderneſs waſte and wild interpoſing, and the Enemies to be encountred, they did not think it worthy of undergoing ſuch hazards and difficulties. The Land of *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, both with reſpect to its pleaſantneſs, and the manner of the *Iſraelites* obtaining it. Their Title to it was derived from the rich Bounty of God, there-

Pſal. 106. 14

therefore 'tis called the *Land of Promiſe*; but it was to be poſſeſt by Conqueſt. Thus the Celeſtial *Canaan* is the pure gift of God, but the actual enjoyment of it is obtained by victorious reſiſtance, againſt the Enemies of our Salvation. And carnal Men deſpiſe this pleaſant Land, the Promiſe being inſeparably joined with Precepts of Duty and Obedience, from which they are averſe. But he that chooſes ſincerely, is joyful and vigorous in the uſe of means for acquiring his moſt deſired good. Ardent Affections, like *Elijah*'s Chariot of Fire, raviſh the Soul above this ſenſible World, to the place where God dwells in Glory. Zeal animates his endeavours, as the Motion of the Heart diffuſes the Spirits into the Arteries, to convey Life to all parts of the Body. *One thing* (ſaith the inflamed Pſalmiſt) *have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord all the days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire into his Temple.* The ſenſual Man is ranging abroad for ſatisfaction, and ſhoots all the Game that croſſes his Eye; but the Soul that has a diſcovering light, and feeling heat of the Divine Beauty, unites

all its deſires in God, and with affection to an extaſy longs for the enjoyment of him, and the endeavours are in ſome proportion to the deſires. Our Saviour tells us, *That from the days of John the Baptiſt until now, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* Some previous rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs appeared in his Miniſtry, and produc'd ſuch a holy ardency in thoſe Converts, that with all reſolution, diligence and earneſtneſs they ſought to be partakers of the Bleſſedneſs revealed. Lazy Deſires, eaſy Proſecutions, ſluggiſh Attempts, diſcover that the Heart is not througly engaged for the ſpiritual Eternal Good. When the End is truly deſigned it will give Law to the Actions. This is viſible in Men who are wholly led by Senſe, how ſagacious, how ſollicitous are they to accompliſh their Ends and baſe Deſigns? They try all ways either by fine Diſſimulation, or toilſome Induſtry to obtain their Deſires. No time is too much in their gainful Affairs, or voluptuous Enjoyments. They transform the Night to lengthen out the Day for their Profit, they vail the Day to lengthen out the Night for their Eaſe and Pleaſure. But

alas,

alas, Heaven is only regarded by the By; as if the intellectual Soul were only given to dwell with the Body on Earth, the place of its Baniſhment, and direct Affairs here below, and not to lead in the way to Heaven, the place of its Nativity, and prepare for another World. The work of Salvation is followed with that remiſs degree of Affection, as if it were a ſlight matter whether performed or neglected. Theſe Perſons carry their Conviction in their Boſoms; for they are ardent and active to obtain inferior and infinitely leſs concerning Ends, but with that cold application mind the ſuperior nobler End of Man, that it is wholly fruſtrate, which plainly ſhews it was never ſeriouſly intended by them.

3. The ſincerity of our Heavenly choice declares it ſelf, in the temper and frame of our Hearts with reſpect to all temporal things in this World. For our main and happy End being eſtabliſhed, that it conſiſts not in ſecular Riches, and Honours, and the Pleaſures of Senſe, but in the clear viſion of God, the bleſſedneſs of the Spirit; it follows that all preſent things are in our uſe ſo far good or evil, and to be deſired or not,

as they are profitable or prejudicial to our obtaining Salvation, as they conduct or divert us from Heaven. A wiſe Chriſtian looks on temporal things not through the Glaſs of diſordered Paſſions, that are impetuous and impatient for what is grateful to them, but with reference to his future Happineſs. He conſiders the train of Temptations that attend an exalted condition, and deſires ſuch a portion of theſe things, as may redound to the Glory of the Giver, and be improved for his own Salvation. This Purity of Affections our Saviour teaches us: For in his divine form of Prayer, the true directory of our deſires, are ſet down in an admirable order all things we are to pray for. And they reſpect the End, or the Means. The End is the primary object of our deſires, accordingly the two firſt Petitions concern our bleſſed End, as it reſpects God and our ſelves. We pray, *hallowed be thy Name*, that is, by the reverence and adoration of all his Subjects: and, *thy Kingdom come*, that is, for the manifeſtation of his Eternal Glory in the next World, that we may reign with him. The Means in order to this End are of two ſorts. Some conduct

duct to it by themſelves, thoſe are the good things deſired in the third and fourth Petitions; and ſome lead to it by accident, and thoſe are the freedom from evils expreſt in the laſt Petition. The good things deſired either have a direct influence upon our obtaining Happineſs; and they are ſum'd up in our univerſal obedience to God's Will, expreſt in the third Petition, *let thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*; or they are ſuch as by way of ſubſerviency promote our Happineſs, and thoſe we pray for in the fourth Petition, *Give us this day our daily Bread.* And 'tis obſervable there is but one Petition for Temporal Bleſſings, and 'tis the laſt in the Order of thoſe that concern good things. And that ſingle Petition is ſo reſtrained, that, 'tis evident by its Tenour, that earthly things are not abſolutely good to be deſired for themſelves, but relatively and ſubordinately to our eternal Good. Daily Bread we muſt ask of our heavenly Father, the neceſſary ſupport of the preſent Life, without which we cannot exerciſe our internal or external Powers and Faculties in his Service, but not Delicacies and Abundance for the luxurious Appetite.

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The difference of Conditions in the preſent World is very great: as in *Pharaoh's* Dream, ſome Ears of Corn were ſo full and weighty that they bended with their weight, others ſo thin and blaſted, that they were as Stubble for the Fire. Thus ſome abound in all Felicities poſſible in this Life, others are *chaſtened every Morning*, under various and continual Afflictions. Now this infallible Principle being planted in the Heart, that all preſent things are to be improved with reſpect to our future Happineſs, will moderate the Affections in Proſperity, ſo to uſe the World that we may enjoy God, and make us not only patient but pleaſed in Adverſities, as they are preparatory for Heaven.

Frui eſt amore alicujus rei inhærere propter ſeipſam, uti autem, quod in uſum venerit, ad id quod amas obtinendum referre. Aug. *de* Doct. Chriſt.

The Original of all the Sins and Miſery of Men, is their perverſe abuſe of things, by turning the Means into the End, ſetting their Affections of Love, Deſire, and Joy upon ſenſible things, as their proper Happineſs, with inconſiderate neglect of the ſpiritual eternal ſtate, to which all other things ſhould be ſubſervient. As if one diſeaſed and ſickly in a Forreign Country, that could not poſſibly recover Health but in

in his Native Air, in his return thither, invited by the pleaſantneſs of the way, ſhould take up his reſidence in it, and never arrive to his own Country. Among the *Weſt Indians* ſome are * reported to be ſo ſwift in running, that no Horſe can keep pace with them, and they have a conſtant rule in their Diet, to eat of no Beaſt, or Bird, or Fiſh that is ſlow in motion, fancying it would transfuſe a ſluggiſhneſs in them. The Chriſtian Life is by the Apoſtle compar'd to a Race, and earthly things by an inſeparable property of Nature load and depreſs the Soul, that it cannot with vigour run the *race ſet before it*. The Believer therefore who intends *for the high price of his Calling*, and is true to his end, will *be temperate in all things*. Nay he will not only be circumſpect leſt they ſhould check with his great Deſign, but wiſely manages them in ſubſerviency to it. St. *Paul*, *charges them that are rich in this World, to do good, to be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying in ſtore for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.* 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

* *Acoſta.*

And the fixed aim at Heaven as our Feli-

Felicity, will reconcile an afflicted ſtate to us. When temporal Evils are effectual means to promote our everlaſting Happineſs, the amiableneſs and excellency of the End changes their Nature, and makes thoſe Calamities that in themſelves are intolerable, to become light and eaſy. *The Poor, the Mourners, the Perſecuted are bleſſed now, becauſe theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Apoſtle, though under variety of ſharp troubles, yet expreſſes his ſence with that mitigation, as but lightly toucht with them: *as ſorrowful, but always rejoicing.* From hence he tells us, that with unfainting courage he proſecuted his glorious End. *For our light afflictions that are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of Glory.* This ſeriouſly believed and conſidered, will make us underſtand the Harmony and Conſent of the moſt diſcordant parts of God's Providence. This will reconcile the ſeverity and roughneſs of his Hand, with the tender Compaſſions of his Heart towards his Servants. This will dry up Rivers of unprofitable Tears that flow from the afflicted, and make the Croſs of Chriſt a light burthen. For their heavieſt Afflictions are not only conſiſtent

ſtent with his Love, but the Effects of it, being influential upon their Happineſs. *Whereas the proſperity of Fools ſhall ſlay them*, and their good things here aggravate their Miſeries hereafter.

4. The ſincere choice of Heaven as our final Happineſs, will make us aſpire to the greateſt height of Holineſs we are capable of in the preſent ſtate. For the End has always a powerful virtue to transform a Man into its likeneſs: and Heaven is a ſtate of perfect conformity to the Holy God. This difference is obſervable between the Underſtanding and the Will in their Operations: The Underſtanding in forming Conceptions of things, draws the Object to it ſelf. The Will is drawn by the Object it chooſes, and is always faſhioning and framing the Soul into an intire conformity to it. Thus carnal Objects when propounded as the End of a Man, ſecretly imprint on him their likeneſs, his Thoughts, Affections, and whole Converſation is carnal. As the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of the Worſhippers of Idols, *they that make them are like unto them, ſo is every one that truſteth in them*: whatever we adore and eſteem, we are changed

Pſal. 115.8.

changed into its Image. Idolaters are as ſtupid and ſenceleſs, as the Idols to which they pay Homage. Thus when God is choſen as our ſupream Good and laſt End, by converſing with him the Image of his glorious Holineſs is derived on the Soul, and it becomes Godly: the Heart is drawn by his attractive excellencies, and the Life directed to him. This being a point of great importance, I ſhall further prove and illuſtrate it. There is no deliberating about the degrees of that which is loved for it ſelf as our End. More or leſs may reſpect the Means that are valued and uſed to obtain it, but the love of the End is vaſt and unlimited. A Phyſician endeavours to recover his Patient to ſound and perfect Health, that being the End of his Art. He that ſeeks for Honour or Riches, is not content with a mediocrity of Succeſs, but drives on his Affairs to the full period of his Deſires. An ardent Lover of Learning with a noble jealouſy ſtrives to excel others in Knowledg. In ſhort, no Man deſigns and longs for a thing as his Happineſs, but will uſe all diligence to gain the preſent and full Poſſeſſion of it. Therefore it cannot be imagined that any Per-

Perſon ſincerely propounds the injoyment of Heaven as his End, but Love will make him fervent and induſtrious to be as Heavenly as is poſſible here. He will ſtrive by bleſſed and glorious Gradations to aſcend to the perfection of his aims and deſires, *to be holy as God is holy in all manner of Converſation, to be pure as Chriſt is pure.* We have an admirable inſtance of this in St *Paul* who declares, *Brethren, I count not my ſelf, to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* His Progreſs was great, yet that did not make him ſlack in the proſecution of his End. He laboured to attain the Preſident of our Saviour, to feel the Power of *his Death and Life, to apprehend Chriſt* intirely and perfectly *as Chriſt had apprehended him. He was very diligent* to improve the Divine Image in his Heart and Life. Phil. 3. 13, 14.

From hence we may diſcover the vanity of their Hopes, that are of luke-warm Affections in Religion, (the abhorr'd character of *Laodicea*) who eſteem it a prudent Principle, as convenient for their car-

carnal eaſe and intereſt, not to be *earneſt in following Holineſs*. Vices in mediocrity are tolerable with them, only the exceſs is condemned. They content themſelves with a mediocrity in Religion, and are preſumptuous and ſecure, as the Church that ſaid, *I am rich, and have need of nothing*. They boaſt as if they had found out the temperate Region between the burning Line and the frozen Pole. They account all that is above their degrees in Religion, to be furious or indiſcreet Zeal, and all below to be dead, cold Profaneneſs. They cenſure thoſe for Hypocriſy or unneceſſary Strictneſs, who are viſibly better, and ſtand upon proud compariſons with thoſe who are viſibly worſe. And thus ſet off themſelves by taxing others. But how eaſily do Men deceive and damn themſelves? Can we have too much of Heaven upon the Earth? Can we become too like God, when a perfect conformity to him is our Duty and Felicity? Indeed Moral Vertue conſiſts in a Mediocrity, not of the habitual Quality, but of the Affections and Actions between the vicious extremities. Fortitude conſiſts in the mean between Cowardiſe, and raſh Boldneſs, but how much the more confections

firm'd the couragious Habit is, ſo much the more a Man excells in that Virtue. Liberality conſiſts between an indiſcreet Profuſeneſs, and ſordid Avarice. Patience between a ſoft Delicacy, and ſtupid Inſenſibility. Thus Philoſophic Virtue glories in its Beauty as pure and intire, between two vicious Deformities. And the Religion of many is Paganiſm dreſt up in a Chriſtian Faſhion. But this mediocrity only belongs to inferiour Vertues, that reſpect things of created limited goodneſs, and is determined according to the worth of their Nature. But divine Graces reſpect an object ſupreamly Good, and their perfection conſiſts in their moſt excellent degrees, and the moſt intenſe Affections and Operations that are leading to it. Faith in its Obedience, Hope in its Aſſurance, Love in its Ardour can never exceed. When the Object is Infinite, a mediocrity is vicious. Humility can never deſcend too low, nor Love aſcend too high: for reflecting upou our natural and moral Imperfections, that we were raiſed from nothing, that we are defiled and debaſed with Sin, we cannot have too low thoughts of our ſelves. And ſince God the Soveraign

Being, infinite in Perfections, and infinitely amiable is the Object, no bounds or meaſure muſt be ſet to our Affections, but with all our united Powers, *all the Heart, and with all the Soul, and with all the Mind, and with all the Strength, we muſt love him*, and pleaſe him, and endeavour to be beloved of him.

There are others will acknowledg their defects, and tell you they do not pretend to eminent Sanctity, to the Graces of the Apoſtles and Martyrs, nor aſpire to their degrees in Glory, they are content with a lower place in Heaven, and leſs ſtrict Religion is ſufficient for their purpoſe. This deceit is ſtrengthned by Popery, that enervates and diſſolves many of our Saviour's Precepts, by teaching they are not Laws obliging all Chriſtans to Obedience, that will attain to eternal Life, but Counſels of Perfection: if they are not done 'tis no Sin, and the performance of them meritoriouſly intitles to a richer Crown. And though Men by impure Indulgencies pleaſe their ſenſual Affections, yet by taſting Purgatory in the way, they may come to Heaven on eaſier terms than a univerſal reſpect to God's Commands, and an equal care to obſerve

obſerve them. But Death will confute all theſe feeble wretched Pretences, for though the Saints above ſhine with an unequal brightneſs, as the Stars differ in Glory: yet none are there but Saints. And thoſe who do not mourn under their Imperfections, and unfeinedly deſire and endeavour to be better were never really good. The ſloathful Servant that did not waſte but neglect to improve his Talent, was caſt into *outer darkneſs*. There are different degrees of puniſhments in Hell, but the leaſt miſerable there are miſerable for ever. In ſhort 'tis a perfect contradiction, a Prodigy, for any Man to think he is ſincere in his Choice, and prepar'd in his Affections for the pure glorious Felicity in Heaven, that does not labour to *cleanſe himſelf from all pollutions of Fleſh and Spirit, and to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.*

CHAP. V.

The Choice of Heaven muſt be early. The Pretences of Mens delaying Repentance. The infinite danger of it.

Secondly. THe choice of Eternal Felicity muſt be early in the prime of our days. The rule of our Duty, and Reaſon binds us to *remember our Creatour in our Youth*, to pay to him the firſt fruits of our Time and Strength. When we are ſurrounded with inticing Objects, and the Senſes are entire and moſt capable to enjoy them, when the electing Powers are in their vigour, then 'tis juſt we ſhould live to God, obey him as our Law-giver and prefer the fruition of him in Heaven, the reward of Obedience, before all the pleaſures of Vanity. 'Tis very honourable and pleaſing to God to give the Heart to him, when the Fleſh and the World ſtrongly ſolicit to withdraw it. 'Tis a high endearment of the Soul to him, when his excellencies are prevalent in the Eſteem and Affections above

bove all the charms of the Creatures. And 'tis an unſpeakable ſatisfaction to the Spirit of a Man, to declare the Truth and Strength of his love to God, by deſpiſing all Temptations when they are moſt inviting, and he is moſt receptive of them. But alas! how many neglect their Duty and defer their Happineſs? They think it too ſoon to live for Heaven before *the evil days come wherein they ſhall have no Pleaſure*, when they cannot Sin, and fondly preſume they can Repent. The infinite danger of this I will briefly lay open.

The Devil is a Sophiſter in perfection, and his ordinary and ſucceſsful Artifice to elude the force of preſent conviction, and wrap Men in Sin and Damnation, is to induce them to delay the great work of the Soul till afterwards. He is not ſo fooliſh to tell them as he did our firſt Parents, *ye ſhall not die*, for the Temptation is ſo palpable that it could deceive none. Though the evidence and certainty of ſupernatural Truths that diſturb the ſecurity of Sinners is ſometimes obſcur'd by affected doubts, yet there is no artifice that can reſiſt the full and ſtrong conviction in Mankind, That Death is inevitable.

Though Nature recoils from it with abhorrence, yet this ſad Truth is ſo viſible that it forces an aſſent from all. Thoſe who are titular Gods are not ſo vain as to pretend to an exemption by privilege from that fatal neceſſity, not to fancy that they may be imbalm'd alive, and Nature made incorruptible by Art. The Pallace is as near the Grave as the Cottage. Therefore the Devil cheriſhes in Men fond hopes of long Life. As ſome Optick Glaſſes deceive the ſight, and make a ſuperficial repreſentation in Colours on a Wall but two or three ſteps diſtance, appear a long deep Gallery. Thus the Tempter by a dangerous artifice preſents to the imagination the fatal term at a great diſtance, and ſince he cannot weaken the certainty of Death in Mens Belief, he removes the Image of it out of their Memories, to leſſen the impreſſion that it is capable to make on their Spirits. They dare not venture to die as they live careleſs of Salvation, and unprepared for their accounts with God; therefore to ſuſpend the workings of Conſcience by a ſeeming compliance, the Tempter inſinuates, there will be a long interval between the preſent time and the laſt hour, that

ſhall

ſhall decide their ſtate for ever, that it will be a convenient ſeaſon to prepare for the other World when they have done with this, as if Repentance were beſt at laſt, when there are no Temptations, and therefore no danger of retracting it.

And the Heart of Man is a great Flatterer, very ſubtile to deceive and ruin him with vain reſolutions of a devout retirement, and becoming ſeriouſly Religious hereafter, and thus by an eaſy permiſſion he gratifies the preſent deſires of the Fleſh, and goes in a Circuit from one Vanity to another, till Death ſurpriſe the Preſumer. 'Tis very applicable to this purpoſe what is related of *Alcæus* the Poet, who from every ſeaſon of the Year took Arguments to give a new title to his intemperance. The Spring requir'd liberal drinking in ſign of Joy for the renovation of Nature; The Summer to temper the heat, and refreſh our draught; 'Twas due to Autumn as dedicated to the Vintage; and Winter requir'd it to expel the Cold, that would congeal the Blood and Spirits. Thus he pleaded for the allowance of his Exceſs. And thus Men in the ſeveral Ages of Life, (which are Athen. *l.* 20. *c.* 9.

correſpondent to the ſeaſons of the Year) have ſome Excuſes to delay Repentance, and give ſome colour to their contumacy in neglecting Salvation. The Vanity of Childhood, the Pleaſures of Youth, the Buſineſs of Middle Age, the Infirmities of old Age are plauſible pretences to put off the ſeeking the Kingdom of Heaven and the Righteouſneſs thereof. Now to excite us to a preſent choice and purſuit of eternal Happineſs, Let us conſider,

1. This Life is the only ſeaſon allowed us for preparation in order to Immortallity. As we improve or neglect it, we ſhall be for ever. 'Tis obſerv'd concerning the *Straights* where the Sea is but a few miles broad, yet from thence it pours it ſelf into the vaſt Ocean that extends to both the *Indies*. So this Life that is confin'd within the ſtraits of Time, iſſues it ſelf into a boundleſs Eternity of Good or Evil. From a few years, well or ill ſpent here, *tam immenſa ſæculorum vaſtitas panditur*, Millions of Ages follow of Happineſs or Miſery. If Men now *ſet their affections on things above*, and earneſtly ſeek them, they ſhall joyfully aſcend to the Inheritance of the Saints in Light: for the

Tam modico ore tam immenſa æquorum vaſtitas panditur. Plin.

preparation for Happineſs is here, the perfection of it hereafter. But if they are *carnally minded*, and the main deſign of their lives be to enjoy the preſent World, when the parting hour is come, and Death ſhall make a ſeparation between them and it, their Miſery is irrecoverable as the Grave. Indeed if we had two lives in ſucceſſion allowed us for tryal, and having err'd in our choice of Happineſs in the firſt, might correct our errour in a ſecond Life, there were ſome pretence for ſecurity: but ſince immediately after Death a private judgment paſſes upon the Soul, without appeal to a more favourable Tribunal, ſince then the errour is unpardonable for ever, there is no ſtupidity equals the preſent neglect of Salvation.

2. Let us conſider the deſperate uncertainties upon which Men build their Hopes of a future Repentance and Divine Acceptance.

1. Men are flattered with the Preſumption of long Life. But what is more uncertain? 'Tis the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to keep concealed in his own Counſels the time of our ſojourning here; for if Men though liable to Death every hour, and therefore

fore ſhould be under a juſt fear leſt it ſurpriſe them unprepared, yet againſt ſo ſtrong a curb run with that exorbitant vehemence after the Vanities of the World, how much more licentious would they be, if ſecur'd from ſudden Death? But none can promiſe to himſelf one day: Death comes not according to the order of Nature but the Divine Decree. How many in the flower of their Youth and Strength, thought themſelves at as great a diſtance from Death as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, when there was but a ſtep between them and Death, between them and Hell. The Lamp ſuddenly expires by a blaſt of Wind, when there is plenty of Oil to feed it. The rich Man pleas'd himſelf with deſigns of ſenſual enjoyments for many Years, yet did not ſee the dawning of the next Morning. *Thou Fool this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee:* This Sentence is now pronounc'd in Heaven againſt thouſands that are alive this day, converſant in the Vanities and Buſineſſes of the World, Eating and Drinking, Playing and Trading, and all unconcerned as to Dying, yet ſhall breath their laſt before to Morrow, and their unwilling

Souls

Souls be rent from the embraces of the Body. In various manners Men die ſuddenly from inward and outward cauſes. An † Apoplexy, an Impoſthume, a Flux of Rhume, ſtopping Reſpiration, kills the Body without any preſaging ſigns of Death. As if the Roof and all the Chambers ſhould fall within the Houſe, whiles the Walls are ſtanding. And how many unforſeen Accidents, and therefore inevitable, put a ſudden period to Life? Is it not then the trueſt Wiſdom to be early in our work for Heaven, when the ſeaſon is certainly ſhort, and uncertainly continued, and the omiſſion is irreparable? Therefore the Goſpel repreſents the coming of our Judg under different images of ſurpriſal; of *a Thief*, that by the favour of the Night breaks into the Houſe; of *a Maſter* that returns from abroad unexpected, to call his Servants to an account: Of *a Bridegroom* that makes his Nuptial entrance, at an unthought of hour, when the wiſe and fooliſh Virgins were aſleep, Conſcience was ſlumbred in the Good and ſtupified in the Bad, to keep us always vigilant and prepared for that hour, that is the end of Time, and beginning of Eternity.

† *Nos corpus tam putre ſortiti nihilo minus æterna proponimus: & in quantum poteſt ætas humana protendi, tantum occupamus; nullæ contenti pecuniæ, nullæ potentiæ. Quid hac re fieri impudentius, quid ſtultius poteſt? Nihil ſatis eſt morituris, nihil morientibus.* Sen. Epiſt. 120.

2. Sup-

2. Suppoſe Life be continued, yet Sinners can have no rational hopes that they ſhall ſincerely repent. For,

1. Saving Repentance is the Gift of God. And is it likely that thoſe who have been inſenſible of the loud and earneſt calls of the Word, that have been inflexible to the gracious methods of Providence leading them to repentance, ſhould at laſt obtain converting Grace? The gales of the Spirit are very tranſient and blow where he pleaſes, and can it be expected that thoſe who have wilfully and often reſiſted his pure Motions, ſhould by an exuberant Favour receive afterwards more powerful Grace to overrule their ſtubborn Wills and make them obedient? Our Saviour tells us, *To him that hath ſhall be given*, but to him that neglects the improving ſpiritual Treaſures, *that which he hath ſhall be taken away.* There are ſpecial ſeaſons of Grace, as the paſſing of Chriſt in the way where the blind men ſate, which neglected, are irrecoverably loſt. God has threatned that his *Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive* with rebellious Sinners, and then their ſtate is remedileſs. This may be the caſe of many even in this Life who are inſenſible

ſible of their Miſery. As Conſumptive Perſons decline by degrees, loſe their Appetite, Colour and Strength, till at laſt they are hopeleſs, ſo the withdrawings of the Spirit are gradual, his motions are not ſo frequent nor ſtrong, and upon the continued provocations of Sinners finally leaves them under that moſt fearful doom; *He that is filthy let him be filthy ſtill*; *He that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous ſtill*, and thus puniſhes them on this ſide Hell, as he does the damned, by giving them over to Sin. Nothing therefore is more dangerous than the uſual excuſes for the delays of Repentance. 'Tis written as with a Sun beam, that God will graciouſly pardon repenting Sinners, but 'tis no where || promiſed, that he will give repentance to thoſe who ſecurely break his Laws upon a corrupt confidence they will repent at laſt. 'Tis a bloody adventure to indulge their carnal Affections, as if they had infallible aſſurance, the word of God confirm'd by his Oath, that they ſhould not dye in an impenitent ſtate.

|| *Nemo ergo ſibi promittat, quod Evangelium non promittit.* Aug.

2. Suppoſing the Holy Spirit be not totally withdrawn, yet by every days continuance in an evil courſe the Heart is

is more hardened againſt the impreſſions of Grace, and more incapable of returning to God. 'Tis therefore the ſubtilty of the old Serpent to make the entrance of Sin eaſy, for he knows that after ſometime it will plead a right by preſcription, and with difficulty be ejected. Cuſtom is a ſecond Nature, and has a mighty power either in that which is good or evil. *Can the Æthiopian change his Skin, can the Leopard change his ſpots, then may you who are accuſtomed to do evil, do good.* If Sin in its infancy can make ſuch reſiſtance that the Spirit of Grace is foil'd in his Motions to reſcue the Soul from its bondage, how much more when 'tis grown into a confirm'd habit? Therefore the Apoſtle urges ſo emphatically, *to day, while it is called to day, hear the voice of God, leſt any be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.*

3. How uncertain is it whether God will accept the Addreſſes of ſuch at laſt? We are commanded to *ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.* The limitation implies if the ſeaſon be neglected, he will hide his Face for ever. Now in caſes of great moment and hazard what dili-

diligence, what caution ſhould be uſed?

1. How derogatory is it to his Majeſty to offer to him the dregs of our Age, the reliques of a licentious careleſs Life ſpent in the works of Vanity? *Is this to give Glory to God?* Contempt provokes Superiors as much as actual Injuries. And how vilifying is it of his excellent Greatneſs, that Men laviſhly waſt the beſt of their time upon their Luſts and the World, and when through weakneſs of Age, or the violence of a Diſeaſe they can no more reliſh the pleaſures of Sin, then only to ſeek his favour, and preſume upon it, as if he could not be happy without them, and it were his intereſt to receive them. *If ye offer the blind for a Sacrifice is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and the ſick is it not evil? Offer it now to thy Governour, will he be pleaſed with thee to accept thy Perſon? ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* Jer. 13. 16.

2. Conſider what Sincerity or moral Value is in Religion that meerly proceeds from bitter conſtraint? 'Tis a rule in Law, *falſum eſt eam peperiſſe, cui mortuæ Filius extractus eſt.* 'Tis not a natural Birth when the Child is extracted from the dead Mother. 'Tis not Ge-

Genuine Piety that is only extorted by the Rack, whilſt the Heart full of averſion and reluctancy does not truly conſent. Pure Religion flows uncompell'd from love to God. 'Tis the Dreggs that come forth with preſſing. 'Tis obſerved of the *Iſraelites* that *when* Pſal. 78.34, 36. *God ſlew them they ſought him, and returned and enquired early after God.* But 'tis added, *Nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their Mouths, and they lied to him with their Tongues, for their Hearts were not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.*

When Sinners are plunged in deep diſtreſs, when the ſhadow of Death ſits upon their Eye-lids, they may with plentiful effuſions of Prayers and Tears deſire God to receive them to Heaven, not to ſerve him there, not to enjoy the Divine Preſence, but as a Sanctuary from revenging Juſtice, as a Refuge from Hell. And will ſuch Deſires prevail? what ſwells the Confidence of Sinners, but unworthy Notions of God, as if a forc'd and formal Expreſſion to him were ſufficient to reconcile his offended Majeſty?

3. There is nothing renders Men more unworthy of Mercy than continuance

ance in Sin upon presumption of an easy Pardon at last. This is the most common deceitful Principle upon which they build their Hopes, as their Actions that bear the image of their Minds clearly manifest. They think that God is so gracious, such a lover of Souls, so easy to be entreated, that upon their dying Prayer, *Lord, remember me in thy Kingdom*, the answer will be, *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

Now this presumptuous Indulgence gives the deepest grain to their Sins, and makes them more uncapable of Pardon. *Chrysostome* observes that *Judas* was encouraged to betray his Master, presuming on his Lenity, Goodness and Benignity, which Consideration intolerably aggravated his Treason, and confounded his Hopes. There is a dreadful threatning against those who reject the invitations of Grace in their Prosperity, and when the righteous Judg comes to Sentence and Execution, are earnest Suppliants for Mercy. *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my Hands, and no Man regarded: But ye have set at naught all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I will also laugh at your Calamity, and mock* Prov. 1.

when your fear comes: when your fear comes as a Deſolation, and your deſtruction as a Whirlwind, when diſtreſs and anguiſh come upon you, then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me; for they hated knowledg, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord. A doleful caſe beyond all poſſible expreſſion, when the ſinful Creature, forſaken of all Comforts below, addreſſes to Heaven for Relief, and meets with Deriſion and Fury, Scorn and Indignation. The fooliſh Virgins careleſs to prepare for the Bridegrooms coming, in vain at laſt diſcovered their want of Oil, in vain ſollicited the wiſe Virgins for a ſupply, in vain knockt at the door crying, *Lord, Lord, open unto us:* the anſwer was ſevere and peremptory, *I know you not*, and they were for ever excluded from Spiritual Joys.

3. I will add further how ineongruous it is to delay the ſolemn work of Reconciliation with God till the time of Sickneſs. This is an affair wherein our tranſcendent intereſt is concern'd, and ſhould be perform'd in our moſt calm and ſenſible condition, when we are moſt capable of reflecting upon our ways, and

and making an exact trial of our ſelves, and returning to God by a holy Change of our Lives. Now that the time of Sickneſs is not a convenient ſeaſon for this Work, is ſadly evident. For ſome Diſeaſes are ſtupifying, and all the Powers of the Spirit are benummed in a duſt Captivity, ſo that the ſick Man only perceives with his animal Faculties. Some Diſeaſes are tormenting, and cauſe a great diſorder in the Soul, and wholly diſtract the Thoughts from conſidering his ſpiritual State. When the Storm is at the higheſt, and the Pilot ſo ſick that he can give no Directions, the Ship is left to the fury of the Winds, and eſcapes by Maracle. When there is a Tempeſt in the humours of the Body, and the Soul by ſympathy is ſo diſcompoſed, that it cannot apply it ſelf ſeriouſly to prepare for the Divine Tribunal, what danger of being loſt, and paſſing from a ſhort Agony to everlaſting Pains? Beſides, ſuppoſe the Sickneſs more tolerable, yet how unfit is a Perſon weak and languiſhing, when Sence and Conſcience are both afflicted, to encounter with the cruel Enemy of Souls? All that truly ſeek Peace with God muſt expect fierce Anger and War

Malè cum his agitur, quibus neceſſitas belli incumbit & morbi. Veget.

from Satan; therefore 'tis a point of neceſſary Wiſdom while we are poſſeſt of Health and Strength, to be in a heavenly preparation againſt his Aſſaults.

4. Conſider how uncomfortable it is to delay Repentance till Age and Sickneſs, when the Fruits of it are not ſo evident and acceptable. In evil days and the approaches of Death, 'tis very hard to diſcover the ſincerity of the Heart, whether Repentance proceed from holy Principles, whether the ſorrow then expreſt be Godly for Sin, or meerly natural for Puniſhment; whether the good reſolutions be the effects of a permanent Fidelity, or of violent Fear, that will vaniſh, the cauſe being removed. When the invitations to Sin ceaſe, there may remain a ſecret undiſcerned love to it in the Heart, which is the centre of Corruption, and root of Apoſtacy. The Snake that ſeemed dead in the cold, revived by the Fire. The inordinate Affection that ſeemed mortified, when the ſenſitive Faculties were diſabled for carnal Enjoyments, may have inward Life, and will ſoon be active and vigorous in the preſence of Temptations. And that a Death-bed Repentance

tance is uſually deceitful, appears from hence, that not one of a thouſand who recover from dangerous Diſeaſes, are faithful in performance of their moſt ſacred Vows to God. How many having a Sentence of Death in themſelves, *and under the terrours of the Lord*, have expreſt the greateſt deteſtation of their Luſts, and reſolved (as they thought ſincerely) that if God would ſpare them, to reform their ways, to become new refined Creatures, exemplary in all holy Converſation: yet the danger being over, their heats of devotion expire as they revive, and their luſts recover ſtrength with their Bodies, and having been ſuppreſt only by fear, are more fierce in their return. Their Hearts were as Marbles that in rainy Weather ſeems diſſolved into Water, but 'tis only from the moiſture of the Air, and remain as hard as ever. All their promiſes of Reformation are ineffective, as violent and void. Now if theſe Perſons had died before this viſible trial and diſcovery, they had paſt into another World with the reputation of true Penitents, deceiving others with their Prayers and Tears, and liberal Promiſes, the outward ſigns of Repen-

tance, and deceived themſelves by the inward workings of an alarm'd Conſcience. Therefore Miniſters ought to be very circumſpect in applying the Promiſes of Mercy to Perſons in ſuch a ſtate: for an errour in that kind has fearful Conſequences. A little opiate Divinity may quiet the Mind for a time, but the virtue of it will be ſoon ſpent, and the Preſumer periſhes for ever.

But ſuppoſe a dying Perſon with true Tears and unfeined perſevering Affections returns to God, can he have a comfortable aſſurance of his Sincerity? Indeed the Searcher and Judg of Hearts will accept him, but how doubtful and wavering are his Hopes, what anxious Fears are in his Breaſt, leſt he builds upon a ſandy Foundation? And how dreadful is it to appear before the Tribunal of God, and expect an uncertain Sentence?

But Sinners ſtill pleaſe themſelves in this, That God has effectually called ſome at the laſt hour, and they may find the ſame favour with others. To this I anſwer.

1. 'Tis true we have ſome rare admirable inſtances of God's Mercy and Grace; the dying Thief, and ſome others,

thers, which ſhew 'tis poſſible with God to aboliſh the moſt vicious confirmed habits in a ſhort time, and by a ſwift Converſion to prepare a Sinner for Heaven. But theſe Examples are not to be drawn into Conſequence, for the encouragement of any in their Sins. A Prince will not indure that his * free Favours ſhould be made a Law to him, and the ſpecial Priviledg of ſome be extended to all. As *Thales* ſaid, an old Mariner that has eſcapt the various dangers of the Seas, was a new Miracle; ſo that one who has lived an obſtinate Sinner dyes a penitent Believer is very rare and extraordinary. What our Saviour ſaid concerning the Salvation of rich Men, is juſtly applicable in this caſe, *that it was as eaſy for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, as for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This ſo aſtoniſht the Apoſtles, that they cryed, *who then can be ſaved?* To mitigate the difficulty, he remembers them of the Divine Omnipotence, *All things are poſſible with God.* Thus for one that has been fitting himſelf for Hell, and hardened in a conſtant courſe of Sin, to be at laſt ſuddenly prepared and received into the pure and glorious

* *Quod alicui gratioſè conceditur, trahi non debet ab aliis in exemplum.* Plut. Symp.

Society above, is poſſible, but poſſible only as Miracles are, by the efficacy of infinite Power, and we cannot reaſonably expect ſuch Miracles. And are Heaven and Hell ſuch trivial things as to be left to an uncertainty? Are not Men concerned in an other manner in the Affairs of the World? How careful to prevent the ſentence of Death, of Impriſonment or Baniſhment? How diligent to obtain ſome temporal Advantage? yet how neglectful in things of the higheſt importance? It may be, ſays the ſecure Wretch, God will give me Repentance at laſt as he did to others. Remember you ſpeak of the † Soul, and dare you hang the weight of an immortal Soul upon a naked poſſibility of receiving Grace. What reaſonable Perſon would neglect a Diſeaſe that may prove deadly, and rely on extream Remedies? And can you be guilty of ſuch a cruel indifference, ſuch a deſperate careleſsneſs, as to leave eternal Salvation or Damnation to a peradventure?

† τί λέγεις ἴσως, ἐννόησον ὅτι περὶ ψυχῆς βεβλευσαι. Chryſ.

Vix dici poteſt quantos hæc inanis ſpei umbra deceperit. Aug.

2. Conſider how many thouſands have dyed in their Sins that cheriſht fallacious hopes of repenting at laſt. *Diagoras* the Atheiſt that denied a governing Providence

vidence of things in this lower World, the Sphere of mutability, when one for his conviction ſhewed him in the Temple of *Neptune*, many votive Tables, containing the grateful acknowledgments of thoſe who by addreſſes to the Gods in dangerous Storms, had arrived ſafe at their Port, and askt him ‖Whether he had obſerved thoſe numerous teſtimonies for divine Providence; he replied, I ſee them, but how many have invocated *Neptune* yet periſht in the Ocean, and never came to pay their Vows for Deliverance. 'Twas impiety in him to argue ſo againſt God's diſpoſing Providence: but it may juſtly be ſaid to thoſe who neglect their preſent Duty, preſuming upon ſome Examples of his Glorious Goodneſs in thoſe who were converted and ſaved in their approaches to Death, how many have finally miſcarried in ſhooting that Gulph, to one that has arrived ſafe at Heaven? How many when Sick, hope either by the vigour of Nature, or the virtue of Remedies to overcome their Diſeaſe, and never ſee Death till they feel it, and delay Repentance till their time is irrecoverably gone? How many are blinded with vain preſumptions to the

‖ *Tu qui Deos putas humana negligere, nonne animadverti ſti ex tot tabulis pictis, quam multi vim tempeſtatis effugerint, in portumque ſalutis pervenerint?* Tull.

the laſt, that God is reconciled to them? and a falſe Tranquillity is more terrible than the ſtorms of a troubled Spirit, for thoſe who hope upon deceitful grounds are in the moſt hopeleſs ſtate, neglecting what is requiſite in order to Salvation. And thus innumerable paſs in a cloud of Ignorance to the Kingdom of Darkneſs. And how many who have lived in a deluding Dream, ſenſual and ſecure, yet at the laſt when by ſome ſharp affliction or the preſent fear of divine Judgment Conſcience is awakened, and looks into the depth of their Guilt, fall into the other extream and dye deſpairing? The Devil makes his advantage of the timerous Conſcience as well as of the Obdurate. Solitude is his Scene as well as the noiſy Theatre, and by contrary ways, either preſumption or deſpair brings Sinners to the ſame end. He changes his methods according to their Diſpoſitions; the Tempter turns Accuſer, and then ſuch who had a dim ſight of Sin before, have an overquick ſight of it, and are ſwallowed up in an abyſs of Confuſion. The condition of ſuch is extreamly miſerable. 'Tis obſerved of || thoſe who are bit with a mad Dog, that being tormented with thirſt, yet

|| *Miſerrimum morbi genus, in quo æger & ſiti & aquæ metu cruciatur, quorum ſpes in anguſto eſt.* Celſ.

yet ſo fearful of Water, that the ſight of it ſometimes cauſes ſudden Convulſions and Death; their Cure is extream difficult, if not impoſſible. This is a ſignificant emblem of a deſpairing Soul. For when the inraged Conſcience bites to the quick, the Sinner fill'd with eſtuations and terrors, ardently thirſts for Pardon, yet fearfully *forſakes his own Mercies*. What ever is propounded to encourage Faith in the Divine Promiſes, he turns to juſtify his Infidelity. Repreſent to him the infinite Mercies of God, the unvaluable Merits of Chriſt ſufficient to redeem the loſt World, it hightens his deſpair, becauſe he has perverſly abuſed thoſe Mercies, and neglected thoſe Merits. The moſt precious Promiſes in the Goſpel are killing terrours to him: as the ſweet Title of Friend, wherewith our Saviour received *Judas* when he betrayed him, was the moſt ſtinging reproach of his perfidious Villany. Thus it appears how dangerous it is to delay our Repentance and Reconciliation with God till Sickneſs and a Death-Bed, when the remembrance or forgetfulneſs of Sin, the ſence or ſecurity of Conſcience may be equally deſtructive.

I would not from what has been ſaid, diſcourage any who have lived in a courſe of Sin, from earneſt ſeeking to God for his Mercy in their laſt hours. Even then they are not utterly deſtitute of hope. The Goſpel ſets forth the Mercy of God to returning Sinners in various forms, and expreſſions of incomparable Tenderneſs. When the loſt Sheep was recovered, there was Joy, as if a Treaſure had been found. The Prodigal had waſted his Eſtate in Luſt and Luxury, and by a harſh reduction came to himſelf, reflected with ſhame upon his Folly and Rebellion, and the ſence of his Miſery (not a more ingenuous or noble principle at firſt) compell'd him to go to his Father, to try what his Affection would do. And it was not a vain Preſumption, for he found the effects of his compaſſionate Love. *When he was a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran and fell on his Neck and kiſſed him. And the Son ſaid, Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. But the Father ſaid to his Servants, Bring out the beſt Robe, and put a Ring on his Finger, and Shoes on his Feet, and bring hither the fatted Calf,*

Calf, and kill it, let us eat and be merry: for this my Son was dead, and is alive again; was loſt, and is found. The deſign of Chriſt was to repreſent his heavenly Father in that Parable, and to wounded Spirits that feel the intolerable weight of Sin, the Mercy and mildneſs of the Goſpel is to be ſhown. God is rich in Mercy *to all that call upon him in Truth.* But to tell Sinners who ſecurely proceed in an habitual courſe of evil, that they may be ſaved at laſt, and notwithſtanding their preſumptuous repulſes of Gods calls to his Service, yet they may come into the Vineyard at the eleventh hour, and be rewarded, is to give countenance and protection to Sin, and to harden them to Deſtruction. Poiſon is not cured by giving Food, but Antidotes, that put Nature into a Paſſion till it be expell'd. The *Terrours of the Lord* can only prove medicinal to ſuch depraved Souls.

To conclude this Diſcourſe; Let us ſeriouſly conſider the Revelation God has made of himſelf in the Goſpel as a Father and a Judg: that Juſtice and Holineſs, as well as Mercy, are eſſential to his Nature, that our Affections may be accordingly moved towards him.

If

If ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of Perſons judgeth according to every Mans work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear Preſumption and Deſpair are very diſhonourable to God, and pernicious to the Soul: the one deſtroys the Fear, the other the Love of God. But Hope contemper'd with fear hath an excellent influence in the Chriſtian Life. As the Ballaſt and the Wind are both neceſſary that the Ship may go ſafely and regularly: without the Winds the Ship can make no way, and without Ballaſt 'tis in danger of overſetting by every guſt. Thus Hope and Fear are very uſeful to bring us ſafely to Eternal Felicity. Fear without Hope ſtupifies the vigour and alacrity of the Soul, that it cannot come to God, and Hope without Fear makes it vain and careleſs of its Duty, and liable to be overthrown by every pleaſing temptation. Briefly, let us rightly underſtand the tenour of Evangelical Promiſes of Pardon and Grace: they are conditional and applicable only to penitent Believers. And unfeigned Faith, the condition of our Juſtification, purifies the Heart, works by Love, and is the living Principle of univerſal Obedience. And Repentance unto

unto Life is productive of all good Fruits in their Seaſon. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, as a Man Sows ſo ſhall he Reap. He that ſows to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption. He that ſows to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life Everlaſting.*

CHAP. VI.

Our Choice muſt be Conſtant. Perſeverance in a holy Life abſolutely required in order to attaining the Reward. The various Temptations that aſſault Chriſtians, to divert them from the purſuit of Heaven. The Reaſon why Perſeverance is neceſſary. Cautions againſt Preſumption, and a vicious dejection of Spirit.

I Shall proceed next to conſider that our Choice muſt be firm and laſting, victorious over all Temptations.

The two principal Rules of the Spiritual Life are to begin and end well: to fix and eſtabliſh the main deſign for Everlaſting Happineſs, and from a determinate Reſolution and ratified purpoſe

poſe of Heart to purſue it with firmneſs and conſtancy: to live for Heaven, and with readineſs and courage to dye for it, if the Glory of God ſo require. Perſeverance is indiſpenſably neceſſary in all that will obtain the Eternal Reward.

For the clearing this moſt important Point, I will firſt repreſent from Scripture the Idea of Perſeverance, that is attended with Salvation. Secondly, Conſider why 'tis ſo ſtrictly required.

I. Saving Perſeverance includes the permanent reſidence of Grace in the Soul: 'Tis compoſed of the whole Chain of Graces, the union of holy habits that are at firſt infuſed into a Chriſtian by the ſanctifying Spirit. When Eternal Life is promiſed to Faith, or Love, or Hope, 'tis upon ſuppoſal that thoſe Graces being planted in the Heart
Rev. 2. ſhall finally proſper. *He that is faithful to the Death, ſhall inherit the Crown of*
1 Cor. 13. *Life. 'Tis Love that never fails* that ſhall enter into Heaven. *'Tis hope firm unto the end* that ſhall be accompliſhed in a glorious Fruition. If Grace be diſſeiſed by a uſurping Luſt, Apoſtacy will follow, and the forfeiture of our right in the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. Grace

2. Grace must be continually drawn forth into exercise according to our several states and duties, and the various occasions that happen in our course through the World. Those *who are light in the Lord are commanded to walk as Children of the Light*; to signify the excellency and purity of the Christian Life. *Those who live in the Spirit must walk in the Spirit*; that is, by a conspicuous course of Holiness declare the vigour and efficacy of the divine principle that is communicated to them. *Paulum sepultæ distat inertiæ celata virtus:* Virtue that breaks not forth into visible Actions is not worthy of the Name. The meer abstaining from evil is not sufficient, but all the positive acts of the holy Life are to be constantly done. In discharging both these parts of our Duty, compleat Religion is exprest, and the power of Grace consists.

3. Perseverance includes not only continuance in well-doing, but fervour and progress towards Perfection. There are two fixt States, the one in Heaven, the other in Hell. The blessed Spirits above are arrived to the heigth of Holiness. The Devil and damned Spirits

are ſunck to the loweſt extremity of Sin. But in the middle ſtate here, Grace in the Saints is a riſing growing Light, and Sin in the Wicked improves every day, like Poiſon in a Serpent that becomes more deadly by his Age. We are injoined not to remain in our firſt Imperfections, but to *follow Holineſs* to the utmoſt iſſue of our Lives, to its intire conſummation. For this end all the diſpenſations of Providence muſt be improved whether proſperous or afflicting. And the Ordinances of the Goſpel were appointed that in the uſe of them we may be *changed into the divine Image from Glory to Glory.*

4. Perſeverance is required notwithſtanding all Temptations that may allure or terrify us from our Duties; what ever affects us one way or other, while we are cloathed with frail Fleſh. 'Tis the fundamental Principle of Chriſtianity declared by our Saviour, *If any Man will come after me*, that is, be my Diſciple, and Servant, *let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me*; even to be crucified with him, rather than wilfully forfeit his Integrity and Loyalty to Chriſt. He muſt by

by a * ſacred fixt reſolution deveſt himſelf of all things, even the moſt valued and deſireable in the preſent World, and actually forſake them, nay entertain what is moſt diſtaſteful, *and reſiſt unto Blood* rather than deſert his Duty.

1. He muſt with unfainting Patience continue in doing his Duty, notwithſtanding all Miſeries and Calamities, Loſſes, Diſgraces, Torments or Death it ſelf, which wicked Men, and greater Enemies, the Powers of Darkneſs, can inflict upon us. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, Eternal Life is promiſed. He that endures to the End* (notwithſtanding the moſt terrible Sufferings to which he is expoſed for Chriſt's ſake) *ſhall be ſaved.* In this a Chriſtian muſt be the expreſs image of his Saviour, *who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs; deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of God.* Diſgrace and Pain are Evils that humane Nature has a moſt tender ſence of, yet the Son of God with a divine generoſity and conſtancy endured them in the higheſt degrees. He was ſcorn'd as a feigned King, and a falſe Prophet.

* *Natator amnem interpoſitum ſuperaturus, exuitur, nec tamen hoc tanto apparatu, quod ſe diſpoliaverit, transnatabit, niſi totius Corporis niſu torrentis impetum ſcindat, & laborem natationis exhauriat.* Paulin. Rom. 2. Mat. 10.22.

He suffered a bloody Death, and by the Cross ascended to Glory. And we must follow him, if we desire to be where he is.

2. But this is not the only trial of a Christian. Prosperity is a more dangerous Enemy to the Soul, though Adversity be more rigorous.

Sævior armis
Incumbit luxuria:

Juven.

For the Spirit is excited by Perils and Difficulties to seek to God for Strength, and with vigilant resolute Thoughts unites all its Powers to oppose them; but 'tis made weak and careless by what is grateful to the sensual Inclinations. It keeps close the Spiritual Armour in the open encounter of Dangers that threaten its ruin, but is inticed to put it off by the caresses and blandishments of the World. It does not see its Enemies under the disguise of a pleasant Temptation. Thus Sin insinuates its self, and by stealing steps gets into the Throne without observation. A Man is wounded with a pleasant Temptation as with the Plague, that flies in the dark, and Grace is insensibly weaken'd. From hence it is that Adversity often reforms the Vicious, and Prosperity cor-

corrupts the Vertuous. Now Perſeverance muſt be of proof againſt Fire and Water, againſt what ever may terrify or allure us from our duty.

5. Saving Perſeverance excludes not all Sins, but total Apoſtacy, and final impenitency, which are fatal and deadly under the New Covenant. *If the Righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth, ſhall he live? all his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned, in his Treſpaſs that he has treſpaſſed, and in his Sin that he hath ſinned he ſhall die. If any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him, ſaith the Lord.* Theſe Threatnings imply, there is a poſſibility of the Saints falling away conſidered in themſelves, but not that they are ever totally deſerted by the Holy Spirit, and left under the reigning Power of Sin. The Threatnings are intended to awaken their Care, and are Preſervatives of them from Ruine, and have a ſingular Influence on their Perſeverance. A vigilant and cautious Fear eſtabliſhes the certainty of their Hope. Indeed from the Reliques of weakneſs and corruption

Eze. 18. 24

Heb. 10. 38

in the Saints, they ſometimes actually fall into preſumptuous Sins, and by rebellious relapſes wound Conſcience, and let out much of the vital Spirits, their Graces and Comforts. But though the divine Nature in them is miſerably waſted by ſuch Sins, yet 'tis not aboliſht. As after the Creation of Light, there was never pure and total Darkneſs in the World. Grace does not conſiſt in a Point, but is capable of Degrees. The new Creature may decline in Beauty and Strength, yet Life remain. Between a lively and a dead Faith there may be a fainting Faith; as in St. *Peter*, for certainly our Saviour was heard in his Prayer for him, that his *Faith ſhould not fail* in his dreadful Temptation. The Saints do not by a particular fall extinguiſh the firſt living Principles of Obedience, Faith and Love; nor change their laſt end by an entire turning from God to the World. In ſhort, a ſingle act of Wickedneſs does not reduce them into a ſtate of Unregeneracy: for 'tis not the matter of the Sin ſingly conſidered, but the diſpoſition of the Sinner that denominates him. If Grace in the Saints ſhould utterly periſh, as ſome boldly aſſert, their recovery would be impoſ-

impoſſible. For the Apoſtle tells us, that *if thoſe who were enlightned, and had taſted of the Heavenly Gift*, that had been under ſome common Workings and lower Operations of the Spirit, if ſuch *fall away univerſally*, and live in a courſe of Sin oppoſite to their former illuminations and reſolutions, it is impoſſible to renew them by Repentance; how much more then if thoſe who were truly ſanctified by the holy Spirit, ſhould intirely loſe all thoſe gracious habits planted in them in their Regeneration? But *David*, though guilty of Adultery and Murder, Sins of ſo foul a Nature as would diſhonour Paganiſm it ſelf, and *made the Enemies of God to blaſpheme*, was reſtored by Repentance. The Goſpel propounds a remedy not only for Sins committed before Converſion, but after it. *If any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* God does not revoke the Adoption, nor reverſe the Juſtification of a Believer: but upon ſcandalous diſorders, a Pardon is not granted with reſpect to the new contracted Guilt, till there be ſincere and actual Repentance. He is not diſinherited, but his right to the King-

dom of Heaven is eclipſed as to the comfortable ſence of it, nay ſuſpended, till by renovation he is qualified and made fit for the enjoyment of that pure Inheritance. For thoſe Sins which are a juſt cauſe of excommunicating an Offender from the Church on Earth, would exclude him from the Kingdom of Heaven without Repentance. Our Saviour tells us, *what is bound on Earth is ratified in Heaven.* And the Apoſtle expreſly declares of thoſe kinds of Sin for which Profeſſors muſt be removed from the Communion of Saints here, that they are an excluſive bar from the Kingdom of Heaven.

1 Cor. 5. 11. *But I have written to you, not to keep Company, if any that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner: with ſuch a one, no not to eat. And know ye not that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of*

1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *God? Be not deceived: neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* If one that is truly a Child of God fall into any of theſe Sins, till by an extraordinary Re-

Repentance he is prepared for Pardon he cannot obtain it, nor have a comfortable hope of entring into Heaven. For only thoſe *who are juſtified are glorified.* Indeed it is not imaginable where *the Seed of God remains*, the vital principle of Grace as it does in *all that are born of God*, but that notorious Sins that cannot be concealed from the view of Conſcience, will cauſe ſtings and ſorrows proportionable to their malignity, and conſequently a hatred and forſaking of them. Now Perſeverance principally reſpects the end of our courſe. There may be interruptions in the way for a time, but if with renewed Zeal and Diligence we proſecute our bleſſed End we ſhall not fall ſhort of it.

2. I come now to conſider the ſecond thing propounded, The reaſon why Perſeverance is requiſite in all that will obtain Eternal Life, and 'tis this, That their Sincerity may be diſcovered by conſtancy in Obedience under all Tryals. *Bleſſed is the Man that endures Temptation, for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* The Law required unſinning Obedience as the condition of Life, the Goſpel accepts of

of Sincerity, but if that be wanting, there is no Promiſe that gives right to the Reward. Now Sincerity implies ſuch an entire Love of God, as makes a Perſon ſubmit to all Duties commanded in his Law, and all Trials appointed by his Providence. A high Example we have of this in *Abraham*, when he was commanded to offer up his only Son *Iſaac*, and by his own Hands, for a burnt Offering. This was to kill a double Sacrifice at one blow, for the Life of *Abraham* was bound up in *Iſaac*: he lived in him more dearly than in himſelf; all his Joys, all his Poſterity by *Sarah* had dyed in *Iſaac*. What reſentments, what reſiſtance of Nature did he ſuffer? yet preſently he addreſt himſelf to perform his Duty. Who ever ſaw a more glorious Victory over all the tender and powerful Paſſions of human Nature? O unexampled Obedience! being an Original without any Precedent to imitate, and without a Copy to ſucceed it. After this clear infallible Teſtimony of his Sincerity, the Angel declar'd from Heaven, *Now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me.* And 'tis ſaid concerning the Followers of the Lamb that *they loved not their Lives unto the Death.*

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The Love of Chriſt that animated them in all their Sufferings, was ſweeter than Life, and ſtronger than Death.

Indeed there was a wonderful difference in the Behaviour of the Martyrs under Sufferings, but in all the ſame Perſevering Grace was evident, though working variouſly. Some in the moſt beautiful Flower of their Age encounter'd Fire and Sword, Tormentors and Torments, with that ſenſible Joy, with thoſe Songs of Praiſe to Chriſt, as if they ſaw the Heavens open with St. *Stephen*, and their Saviour ready to receive and crown them. But many others as *Chryſoſtom teſtifies, went to the Tribunals, to the Theatres, to Death, with many Appearances of Fear. Upon hearing the wild Beaſts roar, they were ſtruck with horrour, at the ſight of the Executioners and the Inſtruments of Torment they were pale and trembling. The Fleſh ſeem'd to cry out, *O let this Cup paſs from me*, yet weak and faint, it followed the Spirit, that corrected the natural deſire, with *not my will, but thine be done*. As the Moon in Eclipſe, though obſcure, yet goes on in a regular courſe, as when 'tis full of Light by the reflection of the Sun: So thoſe deſolate

* Homil. 6. de laud. Paul.

ſolate Martyrs, though as it were forſaken, and deprived of the bright Beams of Comfort, yet perſever'd in their Profeſſion of the Truth. When one word to renounce Chriſtianity would have ſaved them, no Torments could force it from them, but they patiently endured all. Now in theſe the Combate of Nature was viſible, and the admirable Power of Grace. They firſt overcame their own Fears, the reluctancy of the carnal part, their Affections to what ever is deſireable in the World, which is the nobleſt Victory, and then the Cruelty of their Perſecutors. In them was verified the Teſtimony of the Spirit, *Here is the patience of the Saints, Here are they that keep the Command of God and the Faith of Jeſus.*

But how many appear faithful while their Faith is not to be ſhewed by difficult Works, and proved by Sufferings. The Seed that fell on the ſtony Ground, ſprang up as hopeful as the Seed in the good Ground at firſt; but when Tribulation came, it wither'd away wanting the Root of Sincerity. And that which was ſown among Thorns, was choakt by the Cares and Pleaſures of the World. Some Luſt in the Heart inter-

interweaves with the Affections and cauſes Apoſtacy. How many from glorious Beginnings have made a lamentable End? not only Mercenaries in Religion, whoſe Zeal is a foraign Complexion, not ſpringing from an inward Principle of Life and Health, relinquiſh even the profeſſion of Godlineſs, when their gain ceaſes, but ſome who have thought themſelves ſincere, yet in times of danger their reſolutions like ſick Feathers dropt away. As the fooliſh Builder that computed not the charges of his deſigned Work, began to raiſe a magnificent Structure, but unable to finiſh it, laid the Foundation in his own Shame. They repented their choice of Heaven, when they ſaw what it muſt coſt them, and would ſave the World with the loſs of their Souls.

Others that began in the Spirit, and with raiſed Affections ſet out in the ways of Godlineſs, yet by the allurements of ſenſual Luſts and Temptations, (and therefore with greater † Guilt) leave their firſt Love, and end in the Fleſh.

† *Quæ juſtior venia in omnibus cauſis, quam voluntarius, an quam invitus peccator implorat? Negenera pœnarum? Quis magis negavit, qui Chriſtum vexatus, an qui delectatus amiſit? Qui quum amitteret doluit, an qui quum amitteret luſit?* Tert. de pudicit.

Negationem quanta compellunt, ingenia carnificum, &

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They fall from high Profeſſions, but received by ſoft Pleaſures feel not the fall. Theſe were never ſincere, and never had a right to Heaven. They took up ſudden Reſolutions, not grounded in ſerious and deep Thoughts, and for a Flaſh were hot and active, but with great levity return to their former Luſts. The Apoſtle tells us of ſuch, *it had been better for them they had not known the way of Righteouſneſs, than to turn back and voluntarily to forſake it.* 'Tis obſerved that boiling Water taken off from the Fire, congeals more ſtrongly than that which was never heated: becauſe the ſubtile parts being evaporated by the Fire, the more terreſtrial parts remaining are more capable of Cold. So thoſe who have felt the power of the Word in their Affections, and afterwards loſe that holy heat, become more harden'd in their Sins. God juſtly withdraws his Grace, and the evil Spirit that was expell'd for a time returns with ſeven worſe, and aggravates his Tyranny.

To conclude; Since the certainty of Salvation is conditional, if we perſevere in a holy State, let us beware of a corrupt Confidence, and a vicious Dejection of Spirit, the truſting in our ſelves, or

or diſtruſting God. To prevent the truſting in our ſelves, Conſider,

1. The moſt excellent Creatures are by the inſtability of Nature liable to defection, ſubject to a corruptive change. Of this the fallen Angels are a dreadful Example, who of their own motion, untempted, ſinned in Heaven.

2. The danger is greater of falling away, when they are urged and ſolicited by a violent or grateful Temptation. Thus our firſt Parents fell, and loſt more Grace in an Hour, then can be recovered by their Poſterity in all Ages to the end of the World.

3. When there is ſupervenient Corruption in the Creature, that inclines them with earneſt propenſity to forbidden Things, and takes Flame from every Spark, the danger is extream. Like a beſieged City that is in great hazard of taking, by Aſſaults from without and Conſpiracies from within. Let us therefore be very watchful over our Hearts and Senſes, and keep as much as is poſſible at a ſafe diſtance from Temptations. And be very diligent in the uſe of all holy means to confirm and fortify our reſolutions for Heaven. God promiſed

miſed to *Hezekiah* 15 years, but not to preſerve his Life by Miracle, he was obliged to repair the waſtings of Nature by daily Food, and to abſtain from what was noxious and deſtructive to his Body. *The Apoſtle excites Chriſtians, to work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in them to will and to do of his good Pleaſure. Let him that ſtands take heed leſt he fall.* None are a more eaſy Conqueſt to the Tempter then thoſe who preſume upon their own Strength. We ſhould be always jealous of our ſelves, from the ſad Examples of Apoſtacy in every Age. St. *Ambroſe* teſtifies from his own knowledg, that many after the courageous enduring of cruel Torments for Religion, the tearing open their Sides that their Bowels appeared, and the burning of ſome parts of their Bodies, yet when led forth to finiſh the *Victory of Faith*, to be a triumphant *Spectacle to Angels and Men*, when the bleſſed Rewarder was ready to put the Martyrs Crown on their Heads, at the ſight of their mourning Wives and Children

Denique ſæpe cognovimus, quoniam quem formidoloſa carnificum pompa non terruit, nec diviſi lateris ſulcus infregit, nec ardentes lamina à triumphalis fortitudinis vigore abducere potuerunt, eum inter ſacra præmia conſtitutum, Uxor teneræ prolis oblatione, miſerabilis unius lachrymæ miſeratione decepit.

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in the way, were overcome by Pity the weakeſt Affection, and fail'd in the laſt act of Chriſtian Fortitude. *We muſt pray to be ſtrengthned with all Might, according to his glorious Power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs.* For ſome may vigorouſly reſiſt one ſort of Temptation, and render themſelves to others. And if finally vanquiſht by one of thoſe Enemies we loſe our Victory and Crown.

And as Preſumption betrays the Soul into the Devils Snares, ſo a vicious dejection of Spirit from a diſtruſt of Relief from God in our Difficulties, and his aſſiſtance with our unfeigned endeavours for Salvation is very pernicious. For this damps Induſtry, and cauſes either a total neglect, or uncomfortable uſe of Means for that End. Many Chriſtians conſidering their Graces are weak, their Nature fickle and apt to revolt, are ready (as *David* ſaid, *One day I ſhall periſh by the hand of Saul*) to conclude ſadly of the iſſue of their Condition. To encourage ſuch let them conſider, that Perſeverance is not only a Coudition, but a Privilege of the Covenant of Grace. For that affords ſupply of ſpiritual Strength to the

ſincere Believer for performing the condition it requires. Indeed if Grace were the meer product of Free Will, the moſt fervent Reſolutions would vaniſh into a Lye, upon the Aſſault of an overpowering Temptation. As *Hezekiah* acknowledged, that the *Aſſyrian* Kings, had *deſtroyed the Gods of the Nations that were no Gods, but Idols the work of Mens Hands.* But ſanctifying Grace is the effect of the Holy Spirit, and he that *begins that good work in the Saints, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* He that inclin'd them joyfully to chuſe the Spiritual Eternal Good, will bind their unconſtant Hearts, that by a faithful adherence they ſhall cleave to their Duty and Felicity. God has moſt graciouſly declared, *I will put my Spirit into their Hearts, that they ſhall never depart from me.* The Promiſe is founded in the unchangeable Love of God to his People. Were God as Man ſubject to Variation, there might be Jealouſies in Believers leſt they ſhould loſe his good Will. As thoſe who depend on Princes, are ſuſpicious leſt from the natural inconſtancy of the human Will, a new Favourite ſhould ſupplant them. *But whom God loves he loves to the end.*

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The Apoſtle prays for the *Theſſalonians, that God would preſerve them blameleſs till unto the coming of Chriſt*, by this Conſideration, *faithful is he that calleth you, he will do it.* He ſpeaks of the Internal Call, that opens the Heart and overpowers all Reſiſtance. As when the Angel came with a Light ſhining in the Priſon to St. *Peter*, and ſtruck him on the Side, bid him ariſe quickly looſed his Chains, aud led him through the Guards, open'd the Doors, and reſtored him to Liberty. The effectual calling of a Sinner, is the viſible and infallible effect of electing Mercy, and God is unchangeable in his own purpoſe, and faithful to his Promiſes of bringing all ſuch by Sanctification to Glory. The ſame Apoſtle tells the Saints at *Corinth.* That the Redeemer would confirm them to the End: *God is faithful by whom ye are called.* Grace that was at firſt inſpir'd, is continually actuated by the Spirit, who is *ſtiled the earneſt of the Saints Inheritance.* So that whereas the Angels that excell'd in Strength kept not their firſt State of Purity and Glory, but are ſunk into Corruption and Miſery, yet true humble Believers though weak, and encompaſt

with many Difficulties, ſhall be preſerved from deſtructive Evil, and raiſed to an unchangeable Eſtate of Perfection. This is as truly admirable, as if the Stars ſhould fall from Heaven, and Clods of Earth aſcend and ſhine in the Firmament. The Apoſtle who acknowledged *his inſufficiency of himſelf to think a good Thought*, yet triumphantly declares, *I can do all things* (within the compaſs of his Duty) *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* The Love, Fidelity and Power of God are a ſure Fountain of Aſſiſtance to every Chriſtian, that ſincerely reſolves and endeavours to proſecute his laſt and bleſſed End.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

An Account how Men are induc't to chooſe a falſe Happineſs, and reject the true. Directions for the regulating our Choice. The Senſes and Paſſions are the worſt Councellors. The Example of the multitude is contagious.

I Shall now come to the Directions how to fix our Choice aright.

This is a matter of everlaſting Conſequence, it therefore becoms us with the moſt intenſe application of Mind to conſider it, and according to the advice of Wiſdom, *to keep the Heart with all diligence; for out of it are the iſſues of Life.*

Indeed the choice were not difficult between lying Vanities and ſubſtantial Bleſſedneſs, if uncorrupted reaſon had the Superior ſway: but in this lapſed ſtate of Nature, the Underſtanding and Will are ſo depraved, that preſent things pleaſing to ſence, raviſh the Heart into a Compliance. Men are deceived, not compelled into ruin: the ſubtile Seducer prevails by fair Temptations. This

will be evident by reflecting upon the frame and compoſition of Man, as he conſiſts of Spirit Soul and Body, and the manner of his acting. The Spirit is the intellective diſcerning Faculty, the Seat of Reaſon, capable to compare and judge of the qualities of things, and foreſee their iſſues. The Body includes the lower Faculties, the Sences Fancy and Paſſions, that are coverſant about preſent things. The Soul is the Will, the principle of Election, in the midſt of the other, as the Centre to which all their Addreſſes flow. Now upon the propoſal of the ſpiritual and carnal Good in order to Choice, the Will is to be directed by the Mind, and by its own Authority to rule the lower Paſſions. But alas! the Mind has loſt its primitive Light and Purity, Vigilance and Integrity, neglects its Duty, and from Ignorance, Errour and carnal Prejudices often pleads for the Fleſh: and the Will, the rational Appetite, is voluntarily ſubordinate and inſlaved by the Senſitive. From hence it is that in the competition, Heaven with all its Glory is deſpiſed, and the preſent World embrac'd. To open this more particularly, Conſider.

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1. The Sences can only taſte and enjoy groſſer dreggy Pleaſures.

2. The Fancy that depends upon them in its Operations, and is guided by their report, conceives of Felicity only under the notion of ſenſitive Pleaſure. We may illuſtrate this by the practice of || *Aretius* a Painter recorded with Infamy, who being often imployed to Paint the Goddeſſes to be ſet in the Pagan Temples, always drew their Pictures by the Faces and Complexions of his Harlots, that the Objects of his impure Love might have Veneration and a Divinity attributed to them, under the Titles, and Pretence of *Minerva*, *Juno*, *Diana*, and the other Goddeſſes ador'd by the Heathens. This Impiety in an Idolater is reſembled by Men, who fancy Happineſs, (that is a ſpiritual divine Perfection enjoyed in the glorious Viſion of God) to be a carnal Fruition, and having with ſenſible Colours and Lineaments repreſented it agreeable to their brutiſh Faculties, place it in their Hearts, and Sacrifice all their Thoughts Affections, and Service to it.

|| *Flagitio inſigni, ſemper alicujus fœminæ amore flagrans & ob id Deas pingens ſub dilectarum imagine. Itaque ſcorta ejus venerabantur.* Plin

The Fancy is very powerful in Men upon a double account.

1. The Underſtanding naturally receives the notions of things by Phantaſms that are ſtill mixing in its Contemplations. While the Soul is confined to a Tabernacle of Fleſh, it apprehends no Object without the precedent excitation of the Senſes. From whence it is impoſſible, that a Perſon abſolutely deprived of Sight from his Birth, ſhould have an Idea of Light or Colours, or that is born deaf, ſhould conceive what Sound is, the Senſe never having imparted an account of it to them. And the Image of the Object is not immediately tranſmitted from the Senſe to the Mind, but firſt to the Imagination, that prepares it for its view. And from hence the ſenſual Fancy is ſo predominant in ſweying the Judgment, and inclining the Will. As thoſe Councellors of ſtate that have the Ear of the Prince, and are continually with him, by ſpecious Informations, and diſguiſing Truth, influence him to approve or reject Perſons and Things according to the various Aſpects given by them. The ſame Object propounded in a dark confuſed manner, weakly moves us, but varniſht and beautified with lively and pleaſant Colours by the Imagsnation,

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is armed with ſuch Power that raviſhes the eſteem of the Mind, and conſent of the Will. Now Celeſtial Happineſs being purely Spiritual, *ſuch as Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor entered into the Heart of Man to conceive*, though ſome diſcoveries be made of it by Revelation, yet the Imagination makes ſuch an obſcure detracting Idea of it, that it affects no more, than a dead ſhadow drawn in ſome imperfect Lines of an exquiſite Beauty: but when the Fancy is warned and enlivened by the preſence of ſenſible Objects, it makes a vigorous impreſſion of them upon the Mind, and that repreſents the Pictures of Pleaſure as very lovely and delightful to the Will, which preſently imbraces them.

2. The Fancy has a marvellous force upon the ſenſitive Appetite, that eagerly deſires what is repreſented as pleaſant, though the enlightned Mind ſees through the Temptation, and knows 'tis a meer Dream that brings neither ſolid nor durable Joy. One in a Feaver is pleaſed by imagining Fountains and Streams though he knows that imaginary Waters cannot quench his Thirſt, nor afford the leaſt real Refreſhment.

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Now the ſenſitive Appetite being inflam'd by the Fancy, imparts a contagious Fire to the Will, and that induces the Mind, either to concur with it, and palliate the deceit, and to judge favourably according to its Inclinations, or makes it ſlack or remiſs in its Office, diverting the Thoughts from what might controul the Appetite, or if the Underſtanding ſtill contradicts yet 'tis in ſo cold and ſpeculative a manner, *that the Law of the Members* rebels againſt the Superior Light, and is too ſtrong *for the Law of the Mind*, and that Saying is verified,

Video meliora probóq; Deteriora ſequor.

I ſee what is worthy to be choſen, but purſue what is to be abhorr'd. Thus miſerably weak are the rational guiding Powers in Man ſince his Fall, thus imperious and violent the brutiſh Faculties. In ſhort, illuſion and concupiſcence are the principal cauſes why the moſt noble and divine Good is undervalued and rejected in compariſon of inferior tranſitory Vanities. O the cheap Damnation of beguiled Souls!

A Meſs of Pottage was more valuable to *Eſau*, than the Birth-right that had annext to it the Regal and Prieſtly Dignity. Unwiſe and unhappy Wretches! *that follow lying Vanities, and forſake their own Mercies.*

Thus I have briefly ſet down the proceſs of mens fooliſh choice in this degenerate ſtate. Now that we may with a free uncorrupted Judgment compare things in order to a wiſe choice of true Felicity, it follows from what has been ſaid, that as the Apoſtle in obeying his Heavenly Commiſſion, *conferr'd not with Fleſh and Blood*; We muſt not in this matter of infinite importance, attend

1. To the ſuggeſtions and deſires of the Senſes and carnal Appetite, which are the worſt Councellors, as being uncapable of judging what is our proper Happineſs, deceitful and importunate.

Firſt, They are uncapable of apprehending Spiritual Eternal Things, which alone bring fit and compleat ſatisfaction to the Soul: and cannot look forward to the end of ſinful Pleaſures, and ballance the terrible Evils they leave at parting, with the ſlight vaniſh-

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ing content that ſprings from their Preſence. Therefore as blind Perſons lay hold on things they feel, ſo the ſenſitive Faculties adhere to groſs preſent enjoyment, not underſtanding the pure ſpotleſs Felicity that is to come, and deſpiſing what they do not underſtand. Now who would in an Affair upon which his All depends, adviſe with Children and Fools, whoſe Judgment of things is without Counſel, their Counſel without Diſcourſe, their Diſcourſe without Reaſon? There is nothing more contrary to the order of Nature, than for Men that ſhould affect with Judgment, to judg by their Affections.

2. The carnal Appetite with its Luſts are very deceitful, a Party within holding correſpondence with our Spiritual Enemies, the Armies of evil Angels, ſo active and aſſiduous in conſpiring and accompliſhing the Damnation of Men. The Devil in Scripture is called the Tempter by way of eminence, who manages and improves all Temptations, and his pernicious deſign is by the Objects of Senſe ordered and made more alluring and killing by his various Arts, to engage the Affections into a com-

compliance and ſo to gain the Will. Now our great danger is not ſo much from Satan the Enemy without, as from the carnal Appetite, the Traitor within, that gives him the firſt and eaſy entrance into the Soul. He can only entice by repreſenting what is amiable to Senſe, but the corrupt Appetite inclines to the cloſing with it. He tempted Jeſus Chriſt but was repell'd with ſhame, *having found nothing within him to work upon.* The perfect regularity of Faculties in our Bleſſed Saviour was not in the leaſt diſorder'd neither by his fairеſt Inſinuations, or moſt furious Aſſaults. And we might preſerve our innocence inviolable notwithſtanding all his Attempts, did not ſome corrupt Affection cheriſh'd in our Boſoms lay us naked and open to his poiſon'd Darts. The Apoſtle *Peter* who had a Spiritual Eye, and diſcern'd wherein the ſtrength of our great Enemy lies, admoniſhes Chriſtians, *Dearly Beloved I beſeech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, that war againſt the Soul.* And we are told by him, That *the Corruption that is in the World, is through Luſt.* The outward Objects are uſeful and beneficial in their kind, the abuſe

abuſe of them is from Luſt. The Poiſon is not in the Flower, but in the Spider. 'Tis therefore infinitely dangerous to conſult, or truſt our carnal Faculties in this matter, for they are brib'd and corrupted, and will commend temporal things to our choice.

3. The ſenſual Affections are ſo numerous and clamorous, ſo vehement and haſty, that if they are admitted to counſel and give the deciſive Vote, the Voice of Conſcience will not be heard or regarded. In concernments of a lower Nature, 'tis conſtantly ſeen, that nothing more diſturbs Reaſon, and makes Men improvident and precipitant in their Determinations, than a diſordered Paſſion. From hence, 'tis a prudent Rule, That as 'tis not fit to eat in the heigth of a Fever, becauſe the Meat feeds the Diſeaſe, by increaſing the feaveriſh not the vital heat: ſo 'tis not good to deliberate in the heat of any Affection. For then the Thoughts ſtrongly blow up the Paſſion, and ſmother Reaſon, and the Mind is rather a Party than a Judge: but after the declination of that Feaver in the Soul, in a quiet enterval, 'tis ſeaſonable to conſider. Now if any ſimple Paſſion when moved,

moved, transports and confounds the Mind, and makes it uncapable of judging aright, much more the love of the World, an univerſal Paſſion that reigns in Men, and has ſo many ſwarming deſires anſwerable to the variety of ſenſible things, and therefore is more unruly, laſting and dangerous then any particular Paſſion. In ſhort, ſenſual Affections captivate the Mind, and hinder its due conſidering the folly and obliquity of the carnal choice, and when incenſt (as diſtracted Perſons whoſe Strength grows with their Fury) violently break all the reſtraints the underſtanding can apply from reaſon and revelation.

2. In order to make a right choice, we muſt be very watchful leſt the general Example of Men taint our Reaſon, and cauſe an immoderate eſteem of temporal things. *The whole World lies in Wickedneſs*, in a ſenſual Sty, without Conſcience of its Miſery, or care of regaining its Happineſs, deceived and pleaſed with ſhews of Felicity. The way to Hell is broad as the inclinations of the licentious Appetite, pleaſant as the delights of Senſe, ſo plain and eaſy that Men go to it * blindfold, and ſo fre- *Bion.

frequented that it would force Tears from any conſidering Perſon, to ſee Men ſo haſty to meet with Damnation. When *Caliſto* the Harlot reproacht *Socrates* that there were more followers of her Beauty than his Wiſdom, the † Philoſopher replied, that was not ſtrange, becauſe it was much eaſier to draw them in the way of Pleaſure, that is ſteep and ſlippery, than to conſtrain them to aſcend to Virtue, ſeated on a Hill, where the aſcent is ſlow, and with toil and difficulty. Now there is nothing more contagious than Example. We blindly conſent with the Multitude, and are poſſeſt with fooliſh Wonder, and carnal admiring of worldly Greatneſs, Treaſures and Delights, neglecting to make a due eſtimation of things. 'Tis the ordinary Artifice of the Devil to render temporal things more valuable and attractive to particular Perſons, from the common practice of Men who greedily purſue them as their Happineſs. As ſome crafty Merchants, by falſe reports raiſe the exchange, to advance the price of their own Wares. The Men of the World are under the direction of Senſe, and think them only to be wiſe and happy that ſhine in Pomp, abound

† σὺ μὲν γὰρ ὅτι τῷ καταντη ἀυλὸς πάντας ἄγεις, ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἥκειν βιάζομαι, ὁρθία ἡ ἄνοδος ἐστι, καὶ ἀνθὸς τοῖς πολλοῖς. Ælian. *l.* 13. *c.* 32.

abound in Riches, and overflow in Pleaſures. The Pſalmiſt tells us of the proſperous Worldling, *that while he lives, he bleſſes his Soul; and Men will praiſe thee when thou doſt well to thy ſelf.* By vicious imitation our Judgments are more corrupted, and our Paſſions rais'd to higher degrees for painted Vanities. The Affections in the purſuit of earthly things are inflam'd by the contention of others. And when holy Deſires and Reſolutions ſpring up in Men, yet ſo powerful is the cuſtom of the World, that they often become ineffectual. As a Ship whoſe Sails are fill'd with a fair Wind, but makes no way, ſtopt by the force of the Current. Now to fortify us againſt the pernicious influence of Example, Conſider,

1. 'Tis moſt unreaſonable in this Affair of ſo vaſt moment to be under the direction of the Multitude. For the moſt are ſottiſh and ſenſual, govern'd by the uncertain motions of a giddy voluble Fancy, and roving impetuous Paſſions, ſo that to be led by their example, and diſregard the ſolid immortal rules of heavenly Wiſdom, is as perfect madneſs as for one to follow a herd of Swine through the Mire, and leave a

clean Path that lies before him. If there were but few in an Age or Country, that were deluded with falſe Appearances, it would be a diſgrace to imitate the practice of the Fooliſh: and ſhall the great numbers of the Earthly-minded give Reputation and Credit to their Error. He were a ſtrange Fool indeed, that ſhould refuſe a ſingle piece of counterfeit Money, and receive a great heap in payment, as if the number added a real value to them. 'Tis therefore a neceſſary point of Wiſdom to deveſt all † vulgar Prejudices, to ſeparate our ſelves from the Multitude, that we may ſee the vanity of things that dazle inferior Minds.

† *Nunquam de vita judicatur, ſemper creditur, ſanabimur, ſi modò ſeparemur à cœtu.* Sen. *de* vit. Beat.

2. Conſider the univerſal judgment even of the worldly Men in their laſt and ſerious Hours, when the Proſpect of Eternal Things is open before them. How vaſtly different are their Apprehenſions of temporal Things in the review, from what they were in their vicious Deſires? How often do they break forth in the ſorrowful Words of the Apoſtle, *We have been toiling all Night and caught nothing?* When there are but a few remaining Sands in the Glaſs of Time, and Death ſhakes the Glaſs

Glaſs before them, how powerfully do they preach of the emptineſs and uncertainty of things below, and ſigh out in *Solomon*'s phraſe, *All is Vanity?* And this is more ſingularly obſervable in thoſe who have had the fulleſt enjoyment of earthly things. How do they complain of the vain World, and their vainer Hearts, when Experience has convinc'd them of their woful Folly? *Solomon* who was among other Princes, as the Sun in the midſt of the Planets, that obſcures them by his illuſtrious Brightneſs, He that had ſurveyed this Continent of Vanity, to make an Experiment whether any ſatisfaction could be found in it, at laſt ſadly declares, that all things here below are but ſeveral kinds and ranks of Vanities, as ineffectual to make Men happy, as counterfeit Jewels of ſeveral Colours are to enrich the Poſſeſſor. Nay they are not only Vanity, but Vexation, an empty ſhow that has nothing real, but the vexation of diſappointment. And ſhall we not value the judgment of Men when they are beſt inſtructed, and give credit to their Teſtimony when they are ſincere? Certainly in their Approaches to the Divine Judgment they are

moſt conſiderate and ſerious, they have the trueſt and juſteſt thoughts of Things, and moſt freely declare them. O the aſtoniſhing Folly of Men! they will not be convinc'd of the error of their ways, till they come to the end of them, and the Sun is ſet, and no time remains for their returning into the way of Life.

CHAP. VIII.

The ſtedfaſt belief of Eternal Things requiſite to direct our Choice. The power of Faith illuſtrated. Infidelity, total or partial, the cauſe of Mens neglecting Eternal Salvation.

I Shall proceed to ſhew further what is neceſſary to direct us in our choice, that we may not fall into the double Miſery, of being deceived with a falſe Happineſs for a little time, and deprived of true Happineſs for ever. Three things are requiſite for this.

1. A ſound and ſtedfaſt belief of unſeen Eternal Things.

2. Serious Conſideration of the vaſt diffe-

difference between things that are the objects of Sight, and that are the objects of Faith.

3. Humble and ardent Prayer to God, that he would turn away our Eyes and Hearts from Vanity, to the ſolid durable Good.

Firſt, The ſound and ſtedfaſt belief of Eternal Things is requiſite to direct our choice aright. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.* Heb. 11. 1 It aſſures us of their reality and worth as if they were before our Eyes, and in our actual Poſſeſſion. This Divine Light governs and conducts the Will to chooſe wiſely, and excites all the practick Powers for the preventing the greateſt Evils, and the obtaining perfect Felicity. When the Devil, the deadly Flatterer, by inviting repreſentations of the World intices the Heart, the ſerious belief of the future reward ſo glorious and eternal, diſgraces the moſt ſplendid Temptations, and makes them ineffectual. *This is the Victory that overcomes the World, even our Faith.* If tempted to Laſciviouſneſs by the allurements of an earthly Beauty, Faith repreſents the angelical luſtre of the Saints, when they ſhall come with the unſpotted

Lamb in his glorious appearance, and this unbinds the Charm, and makes the tempting Perſon an object not of Deſire, but Averſation. If tempted with Honour to a ſinful compliance, Faith repreſents ſo convincingly the Glory which all thoſe who preſerve their Conſcience and Integrity inviolable, ſhall receive at the univerſal Judgment, in the preſence of God, and the holy Angels, (as our Saviour has promis'd, *He that ſerves me, him will my Father honour*) and the confuſion wherein the moſt honourable Sinners ſhall then be cover'd, that with a generous diſdain all ſecular honours will be deſpiſed. And it is as powerful to enervate the Temptation of temporal Profit. We read of *Moſes, that by Faith, when he was come to Years*, (and therefore more capable to underſtand and enjoy what Felicity the brighteſt Honours and greateſt Riches could afford) *refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter*; *chuſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a ſeaſon*; *eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than the Treaſures of* Egypt: *for he had reſpect to the recompence of Reward.* And all the Evils which a wicked

wicked World, inſpir'd with rage from Satan, can threaten to fright us from our Duty, Poverty, Diſgrace, Baniſhment, nay Torments and Death, thoſe *terribles viſu formæ*, ſo heightned by the carnal Fancy, are eaſily overcome by a ſincere and ſtrong Believer. Thus ſome who were urged by ſuch motives to renounce their Religion, told the Perſecutors, that Life was not ſweet to them if they might not live Chriſtians, nor Death bitter if they muſt die for Chriſt. A lively firm perſuaſion of the excellence and eternity of the Reward, what miraculous effects would it produce? Nothing would be impoſſible within the compaſs of our Duty, either to do or ſuffer in order to a glorious Immortality. Faith has a celeſtial Power, a magnetick Virtue to draw up the Heart from the Earth, and faſtens it to things above. It is not imaginable that a clear ſighted Soul, that ſees a Good infinitely great, ſhould reject it for mean things to pleaſe the lower Deſires. We may as probably imagine, that a skilful Jeweller would part with the richeſt Oriental Pearls, for Cherry Stones to play with Children.

Nec veremur occidi, quos conſtat, quando occidimus coronari. Cyp.

From hence we may diſcover the

true cauſe of the neglect of the great Salvation offered in the Goſpel, *the Word preached does not profit, not being mixt with Faith in them that hear it.* It is aſtoniſhing to conſider that Earth ſhould contend with Heaven for our Affections, and prevail againſt it; that Vanity ſhould turn the Scale againſt the *exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*; that Men ſhould purſue fleeting Shadows, and neglect the moſt excellent Realities, as if they could be happy here, and continue for ever, and hereafter there were neither Happineſs nor Eternity. But this releaſes the wonder, that *all Men have not Faith.* Eternal Things are not of conſpicuous moment in the carnal Ballance. Some are Infidels in Profeſſion, openly declaring themſelves to be without Religion, without God, and have the ſame credit of the Heaven and Hell diſcovered in the Goſpel, as of the *Elyſian Fields*, and *Stygian Lake*, the Fables of the Poets. Theſe live as if they ſhould never die, and die as if they ſhould never live in the other World, as if Death cauſed ſo deep a ſleep, that the Voice of the Son of God could not awaken them at the laſt day. Their unbelief is not from reaſon, but

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vicious oppoſite Affections; for the truth of the Eternal State is ſo clearly revealed, and ſtrongly eſtabliſht in the Goſpel, that the ſincere Mind muſt readily aſſent to it. But the Wicked cannot delight in the diſcovery of that for which they are unprepared, and therefore try all ways to elude the force of the moſt ſatisfying Arguments. They do not fear Hell, but are afraid they ſhould be fearful of it. This is ſuch a piece of Folly as that of the *Weſt Indians*, who at the firſt Invaſion by the *Spaniards*, were ſo terrified with the glittering of their Swords that they preſently fled, and very adviſedly reſolved to hide themſelves in the day, and aſſault their Enemies in the night. They were fearful to ſee their Danger, and raſh to encounter it, and fighting in the dark were killed in the dark. The Threatnings of Eternal Death are the brandiſhings of God's glittering Sword before he ſtrikes, and ſenſual Infidels are afraid leſt the belief of thoſe terrible Truths ſhould enter into their Breaſts; therefore are utterly careleſs of what may convince them of their danger, and will not foreſee what they ſhall certainly ſuffer. This is obſtinate, and the

the moſt incurable Infidelity. An inſtance whereof we have in the *Phariſees*, who rejected our Saviour. Though all the Characters of the *Meſſiah* were conſpicuous in his Perſon, though his Doctrines were confirmed by Miracles, yet they would not yeild up themſelves to that omnipotent conviction, ſo ſtrong were their carnal prejudices againſt his humble State, and holy Doctrines. That reproach is more juſtly due to Infidels under the Goſpel, than to *Iſrael* in the Prophet: *Who is blind as my Servant?* The Heathens who are blind from their Birth, and have only ſome glimmering apprehenſions that Eternity ſucceeds Time, are leſs culpable than thoſe who have infinitely more reaſon to believe it, and yet believe it leſs. The Plea for them will be a terrible Accuſation againſt ſuch Unbelievers. If a blind Perſon falls, it moves compaſſion; but if one voluntarily ſhuts his Eyes againſt the Sun, and refuſes the direction of the Light, and falls from a Precipice, his Ruin is the juſt conſequence of his Folly. Simple Ignorance excuſes as to the degrees of the Fault, but affected wilful Ignorance, now Reaſon and Revelation with united

Beams

Beams give ſo clear a proſpect into the Eternal World, aggravates the Guilt, and Sentence of ſuch Unbelievers. 'Tis in vain to offer Arguments to convince them; for they are as deaf as Adders to the wiſeſt Inſtructions, till Senſe extort a belief from them. They have hardned their Hearts and Faces againſt all Reproofs, and by an open contempt of Scripture-Threatnings, are paſt reclaiming. There are many degrees of Sins, many ſteps in the deſcent to Hell, but the loweſt and neareſt the Gates of that infernal Priſon, is the ſcornful deriſion of God's terrible preparations for the Wicked hereafter.

Beſides, the moſt who are Believers in Title, are Infidels in Heart. Our Saviour tells the *Jews*, who pretended the higheſt Veneration to the Writings of *Moſes*, *That if they had believed Moſes, they would have believed him; for Moſes wrote of him.* If Men did ſeriouſly believe ſuch an excellent Reward, as the Goſpel propounds, would it be a cold unperſuaſive motive to them? The depravation of the Will argues a correſpondent defect in the Mind, though not abſolute total Infidelity, yet ſuch a weakneſs and wavering in the Aſſent, that when Temptations

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are preſent and urgent, and it comes to actual choice, Senſe prevails over Faith. This will be clear by Univerſal Experience in temporal things. The probable hope of Gain, will make thoſe who are greedy of Gold, prodigal of their Lives, and venture through tempeſtuous Seas to accompliſh their Deſires. And if the belief were equal, would not Men do or ſuffer as much for obtaining what is infinitely more valuable? A firm Aſſent would produce adherence, and Faith in the Promiſes, Fidelity in obeying the Commands of Chriſt. *Tertullian* propounds it as a powerful incentive to the Martyrs, *Quis ergo non libentiſſimè tantum pro vero habeat erogare, quantum alii pro falſo?* Who would not joyfully ſacrifice Life and all it sindearments, to obtain true Bleſſedneſs, which others do for the vain Appearance of it? On the contrary, the fear of a preſent deſtructive Evil will controul the moſt eager Appetites. 'Tis recorded that when the Army of *Iſrael* were in purſuit of the *Philiſtins*, *Saul* to compleat his Victory, forbad upon pain of Death that any ſhould taſte Food till the Sun was down. In the chaſe of their Enemies, they paſt through a Wood abounding with Honey,

1 *Sam.* 14. 24, 25, 26.

ney, yet notwithſtanding their Hunger and Faintneſs, and the eaſy Proviſion before them, no Man ſo much as taſted it; *for the People feared the King's Oath.* And did Men truly believe and fear the Law of God threatning Hell for Sin, would they dare to commit it, though invited by pleaſant Temptations? Nay not only a ſtrong fear, but the meer ſuſpicion of great danger will reſtrain the moſt vehement deſires of Nature. What Perſon though inflamed with Thirſt, would drink a Glaſs of cool Liquor if he ſuſpected that deadly Poiſon were mixt with it? And if Men were perſuaded that Sin is attended with Death, would they *drink in Iniquity like Water?* The Devils themſelves are not able to conquer the Fear *of Judgment to come, they believe and tremble.* Therefore when it is not active upon the Conſcience, it is either becauſe Men do not believe the thing it ſelf, or that Holineſs is neceſſary to prepare for it. Indeed even in true Believers the apprehenſion of Eternal Things has ſuch great allays, that temporal things are over-valûed and over-feared. A ſtrong Faith in the Truth and Power of God, would make the glorious World ſo ſure and near

near in our Thoughts, that with indifferent Affections we ſhould receive good or evil things here, *rejoice as if we rejoiced not, and mourn as if we mourned not.* Our Lives would be ſo regular and pure, as if the Judg were to come the next hour, as if the Sun did now begin to be darkned, and the Trumpet of the Arch-angel were ſounding, and the noiſe of the diſſolving World were univerſally heard. Infidelity deads the Impreſſion, and ſuppreſſes the reigning Power of Eternal Things in our Hearts. In ſhort, Men are heavenly or earthly in their Choice and Converſation, as they are directed by the ſincere Light of Faith, or miſled by the falſe beams of Senſe.

CHAP

CHAP. IX.

Conſideration is requiſite in order to a wiſe Choice. How it muſt be managed that it may be effectual. It muſt be ſerious, frequent, and with application to the Soul. Motives to it. The true Cauſes why Carnal Men are averſe from it.

THE ſecond thing requiſite in order to a wiſe Choice is Conſideration. For as by Faith the virtue of the Reward is diffuſed through all the Faculties, and the Powers of the World to come are felt in the Soul; ſo, by conſideration, Faith is exerciſed and becomes effectual. This unites and reinforces the beams of Eternal Truth, and inflames the Affections. As the Pſalmiſt expreſſes himſelf, *My Heart was hot within me while I was muſing, the Fire burned.* Heaven is a Felicity ſo glorious and attractive, that if duly conſidered, no Man can poſſibly refuſe it: and Hell is a Miſery ſo extream and fearful, that if ſeriouſly laid to Heart, none can poſſibly chooſe it. The laſt End is to be conceived under the notion of an infinite,

infinite Good, without the leaſt mixture of Evil, to which the human Will has a natural tendency. The liberty of indifference is with reſpect to ſome particular good Things, which may be variouſly repreſented, ſo as to cauſe inclination or averſion. That Men who believe Eternal Life is the Reward of Holineſs, yet with a careleſs inadvertency paſs over their Duty; and that Eternal Death is the Wages of Sin, yet ſecurely continue in it, is more wonderful than to ſee Martyrs ſing in the Flames, and the great cauſe of it is the neglect of Conſideration. This is aſſigned to be the cauſe of that unnatural and aſtoniſhing Rebellion of *Iſrael* againſt God their Father and Soveraign: *Hear O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth, for the Lord hath ſpoken, I have nouriſhed and brought up Children and they have rebelled againſt me. The Ox knows his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib, but Iſrael doth not know, my People doth not conſider.*

Iſa. 1. 2, 3.

This Duty as it is of admirable Advantage, ſo 'tis univerſally neceſſary: for all are equally concern'd, and it is within the power of all to perform. Though Men cannot convert themſelves, yet

yet they may consider what is preparatory to Conversion. For the Will may turn the Thoughts of the Mind to any sort of Objects.

I will briefly shew the nature of this Duty, and how to manage it for spiritual profit, and those Objects from whence our Thoughts derive vigour for the swaying of the Will and the conduct of the Life.

1. The nature of Consideration is discovered by its end, which is this; that the Mind being satisfied in the just Reasons upon which the choice of Heaven is to be made, the Will and Affections may be ingaged in an earnest joyful and constant pursuit of it. And in this respect it differs from simple Knowledg, and naked Speculation, that informs the Mind without influence and efficacy upon the Heart. Like a Garland of Flowers that adorns the Head without any benefit and refreshing to him that wears it. And practical meditation differs from the study of divine things in order to the instructing of others. That is like a Merchant's buying of Wine for Sale, this like providing it for our own use.

2. That the Consideration of Eter-

nal Things may be effectual, it muſt be,

1. Serious and deliberate. For the Affair is great in reality above all poſſible conception or compariſon. All other things, how conſiderable ſoever in themſelves, yet reſpectively and in parallel with this, are of no account. Our Saviour told *Martha*, *One thing is neceſſary: Mary hath choſen the better part, that ſhall not be taken from her.* What Inſtance can be of equal moment with that of entertaining the Son of God? yet a ſerious attention to the Words of Eternal Life dropping from his Lips, was more neceſſary than making Proviſion for him. The greateſt and moſt weighty Affairs in the World are but a vain Employment, but irregularity and impertinence, in compare with Eternal Salvation. And the greateſt ſolemnity of Thoughts is requiſite, to undeceive the Mind, and ingage the Will for Heaven. 'Tis very obſervable that Errors in Judgment and Choice ſpring from the ſame cauſes, the not ſincere and due weighing of Things. In the deciſions of Queſtions, Truth is diſcovered by comparing, with an equal ſtaid Attention, the Reaſons of the one and the other part: but when ſome vicious Affection

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contradicts the Truth, it fills the Mind with Prejudices, that it cannot impartially ſearch into things, and is deceived with ſpecious fallacies, with the image of Truth. For according to the preſent application of the Mind 'tis determined, and Paſſion ſtrongly applies it to conſider that which is for the carnal Intereſt, and conſequently Inclination, not Reaſon, is the principle of the Perſuaſion. And this is more evident in Mens fooliſh Choice. As the Eye cannot ſee but what is viſible, nor the Underſtanding conceive what is not Intelligible, the Will cannot love and chuſe what is not amiable at leaſt in ſhew. If the Devil did appear without a diſguiſe, he would have no power to perſuade, but in all his Temptations there is the mixture of a Lie to make it pleaſant. He preſents a falſe Perſpective, to make what is but ſuperficial appear ſolid and ſubſtantial. And the carnal Heart turns the Thoughts to what is grateful, without ſeriouſly conſidering what is infinitely better, and accordingly chuſes by the Eye of Senſe, the Happineſs of this World. Therefore till Eternal Things are open'd in the view of Conſcience, and the Mind calmly conſiders by the

Light of Faith their reality and greatneſs, no right valuation, nor wiſe choice can be made.

Beſides, the moſt clear and rational enforcements by the actings of the Thoughts, are neceſſary to make a ſtrong impreſſion on the Affections, and reſcue them from the captivity of the Fleſh. In other things as ſoon as the Mind is inlightned, the Will reſolves, and the inferior Faculties obey; but ſuch is the reſiſtance of the carnal Heart, that although 'tis evident from infallible Principles there is an everlaſting Glory, infinitely to be prefer'd above the little appearances of Beauty and Pleaſure here, yet the moſt piercing reaſons enter heavily without earneſt inculcation. Slight or ſudden Thoughts may produce vaniſhing Affections of complacence, or diſtaſte, and fickle reſolutions, that like ſick Feathers drop away, and leave the Soul naked to the next Temptation; but ſolemn and fixed Thoughts are powerful on the Heart, in making a thorow and laſting Change. When the Clouds diſſolve in a gentle Shower, the Earth drinks in all, and is made Fruitful; but a few ſprinkling Drops, or a ſhort ſtorm of Rain, that wets only the Surface, without

ſinking to the Root, is little beneficial. In ſhort, there may be ſome excitations to Good, and retractions from Evil, ſome imperfect faint eſſays towards Heaven, from an impulſe on the Mind; but ſolid Converſion is produc'd by deliberate Diſcourſe, by the due conſideration and eſtimation of things, 'tis rational and perpetual.

2. Conſideration muſt be frequent to keep eternal Objects preſent, and powerful upon us. Such is the natural Levity and Inconſtancy, Sloth and Carnality of the Mind, That the Notions of Heavenly Things quickly paſs through, but of Earthly abide there. If a Stone be thrown upwards, it remains no longer in the Air, than the impreſſion of the force by which it was thrown continues; but if it falls on the Earth, it reſts there by Nature. When the Soul is raiſed in contemplation to Heaven, how apt is it to fall from that heighth, and loſe the eſteem, the lively Remembrance and Affections of Eternal Things? But when the Thoughts are excited by the preſence of what is pleaſing to Senſe, the withdrawing the Object does not deface the Idea of it in the Memory, nor leſſen the Conceit,

nor cool the Deſires of it, becauſe the Heart is naturally inclined to it. Therefore 'tis neceſſary every day to refreſh and renew the conceptions of eternal Things, that although they are not always in act, yet the efficacy may be always felt in the Heart and Life. The Soul habituated to ſuch Thoughts will not eaſily yield to Temptations, that ſurpriſe and overcome others that are Strangers in their Minds to the other World: Nay the preſence of Temptations, as by *Antiperiſtaſis*, will reinforce the Reſolutions for Heaven; like the powring Water upon Lime, that revives a hidden Fire in it, which ſeems a natural Miracle. 'Tis therefore of great advantage frequently to ſequeſter our ſelves from the World, to redeem Time from ſecular Affairs, for the recollecting of our Thoughts and their ſolemn exerciſe upon the Eternal World. Senſe that reveals natural things, darkens ſpiritual. How can the Thoughts be fixt on inviſible things ſo diſtant from Senſe, if always converſant with ſecular Objects that draw them down? In the ſilence of the Night a ſmall Voice is more diſtinctly heard, and a little diſtant Light more clearly ſeen: ſo when the

Soul

Soul is withdrawn from the noiſy throng of the World, and outward things are darkned, the Voice of Conſcience is better heard, and the Light of Heaven more perfectly received.

3. Conſideration of Eternal Things muſt be with preſent Application to the Soul. 'Tis not the meer conviction of the Mind, but the decree of the Will that turns Men from Sin to Holineſs, from the Creatures to God. The Heart is very deceitful, and by variety of ſhifts and palliations is diſpoſed to irreſolutions and delays in ſpiritual Concernments. How often does the miſerable Sinner contend with himſelf, and while Conſcience urges him to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Affections draw down to the Earth, the carnal part prevailing over the rational, he overcomes, and is overcome, he is convinced and condemned by his own Mind. Till Conſideration iſſues in this, that with ſetled Judgment and Affections the Soul determines for God and Heaven, 'tis without profit. Therefore in the managing this Duty, 'tis our Wiſdom not to be curious and inquiſitive after ſubtile Conceptions, and exalted Notions of the future State, that

little confer to the making the Heart better, but to think ſeriouſly on what is plain and evident, and moſt uſeful to produce a preſent laſting Change. It were egregious Folly in a Man, that for the uſe of his Garden ſhould with great labour fetch Water from diſtant Fountains, and neglect that which ſprings up in his own Ground. That Meditation is profitable which produces not new Thoughts, but holy and firm reſolutions of obeying God in order to the full enjoying of him for ever.

To perſuade us to the ſerious practice of this Duty, there are many enforcements.

Is any Man ſo fooliſh, ſo regardleſs of his convenience, to purchaſe a Houſe wherein he muſt live all his Days, and will not firſt ſee whether it will be convenient, and ſecure for his Habitation? Shall we not then conſider Heaven the Manſion of Bleſſedneſs, and Hell the Seat of Miſery and Horror? for according as we chuſe here, we ſhall be in the one or other place for ever. I ſhall in a particular Chapter endeavour to repreſent ſomething of the inexpreſſible Miſery of the Wicked hereafter, and ſhew how congruous and powerful the Thoughts

Thoughts of it are to reſtrain Men from Sin, but at preſent ſhall briefly excite to the Meditation of the Heavenly Glory, as the moſt noble, delightful and fruitful work of the Soul, whiles confin'd to the Body of Fleſh. 'Tis the moſt exalted exerciſe of the Mind, the pureſt converſe with God, the Flower of conſecrated Reaſon. 'Tis moſt like the Life of glorified Spirits above, who are in continual contemplation of the Divine Excellencies, and 'tis moſt raiſed above the Life of carnal Men, that are ſunk into ſenſuality and brutiſhneſs. 'Tis the moſt joyful Life, in that it ſheds abroad in the Soul delights that neither ſatiate, nor corrupt, nor weaken the Faculties, as the delights of Senſe do, but afford perfection as well as pleaſure. 'Tis the moſt profitable Life. As in thoſe parts of the Earth where the beams of the Sun are ſtrongly reflected, precious Metals and Jewels are produc'd, wherein the refulgent reſemblance of that bright Planet appears: ſo the lively and vigorous exerciſe of the Thoughts upon the heavenly Glory, will produce Heavenly Affections, heavenly Diſcourſes, and a heavenly ſhining Converſation. This will make us live

live like the bleſſed Society above, imitating their Innocence and Purity, their joyful, entire and conſtant Obedience to God. This confirms the holy Soul in its Choice, with an invincible efficacy againſt the Temptations and Luſts of the World. The ſerious conſidering Believer is filled with raviſhing Wonder of the Glory that ſhall be revealed, and looks down with Contempt upon the Earth, and all that has the Name of Felicity here. All the Invitations, nay Terrors of the World, are as unable to check his purſuit of his bleſſed End, as the Breath of an Infant to ſtop the high flight of an Eagle.

But how rare and diſuſed a Duty is this? How hardly are Men induc'd to ſet about it? Buſineſs and Pleaſures are powerful Diverſions. Some pretend Buſineſs as a juſt cauſe, but in vain; *for the one thing neceſſary* challenges our principal Thoughts and Care. Beſides, there are intervals of Leiſure, and the Thoughts are always ſtreaming, and often run waſte, which directed aright, would be very fruitful to the Soul. The true cauſe of this neglect is from the inward temper of Men. Carnal Pleaſures alienate the Mind, and make it unfit for the deep

ſerious

ſerious actings of the Thoughts upon Eternal Things. *I have ſaid of Laughter, thou art mad*, it makes the Mind light and vain and deſultory. As a diſtracted Perſon by every motion of Fancy flys from one thing to another without coherence. The Heart fill'd with cloudy Cares, and ſmoaky Fires, with Thoughts and Deſires about worldly Things, is unprepar'd for ſuch a clear, calm and ſedate Work. A Carnal Perſon can taſte no ſweetneſs, feel no reliſh in the Meditation of Heaven, nor any ſpiritual Duty. 'Tis as if one ſhould take ſome delicious Fruit into his Mouth, a Peach or the like, without breaking the Skin; it would be rather a trouble, than pleaſant. Nay the Goſpel expreſly declaring, *that without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee God*; thoſe who by vicious Affections are ingaged in any ſinful way, being conſcious of their guilt and unpreparedneſs, and that while ſuch, they are under a peremptory excluſion from celeſtial Glory, cannot endure the thoughts of Heaven. The Divine Preſence is their Torment, and the ſerious Conſideration of it, is to bring them before God's holy and juſt Tribunal, to accuſe and condemn them.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Objects of Conſideration ſpecified. The End of Man's Creation conſidered. The Things of the World and Heaven that ſolicit our Choice, conſidered in their Quality and Duration.

I Shall next proceed to a more particular view of thoſe Objects, from whence Conſideration derives vigour, for the inclining of the Will to a right Choice, and for regulating the Life.

1. Conſider the End for which Man was deſigned in his Creation, why endued with rational and noble Powers of Soul, and plac'd by the Soveraign Maker in the higheſt rank of ſo numerous and various Natures that fill the Univerſe. Is it to raiſe an Eſtate, to ſhine in Pomp, to enjoy ſenſual Pleaſures for a little while, and after the fatal term to be no more for ever? Was he ſent into the World upon as mean a Buſineſs as that of the fooliſh Emperor, who employed an Army, furniſh'd with all Military Preparations, to gather Shells upon the Sea-ſhore? This were, accord-

according to the paſſionate expoſtulation of the Pſalmiſt, to charge God *that he had made all Men in vain.* Reaſon and Scripture tells us the End of Man is to glorify and enjoy God, the obtaining whereof makes him perfectly happy, and the miſſing of it perfectly miſerable. This is a fundamental Truth, upon which the whole Fabrick of Mans Duty and Felicity is built. Without this Foundation, our Faith preſently ſinks. If the clearneſs of this principle be obſcur'd, we ſhall wander from the way of Eternal Life, and not only loſe the way, but the remembrance and deſire of it. Thinking is the property of the reaſonable Soul, and the juſt order of Conſideration is, that the Mind primarily regards this ſupream directive Truth that is to govern all our Actions. 'Twas prudent Counſel that * one of the Antients gave for compoſing a Book, that the Author frequently reflect upon the Title, that it may correſpond in all the parts with his original Deſign. Thus it becomes a Man often to conſider the End of his Being, that the courſe of his Life may have a direct tendency to it; and the more excellent our End is, the more conſtraining is the neceſſity to pro-

* *Primum ego ſcriptoris officium exiſtimo, ut titulum ſuum legat, atque identidem interroget ſe, quid cæperit ſcribere.*

proſecute it. 'Tis of great Efficacy to reflect upon our ſelves, Whither do my Thoughts and Deſires tend? for what do I ſpend my Strength and conſume my Days? Will it be my laſt Account how much by my Prudence and Diligence I have exceeded others in temporal acquiſitions? If a General were at play while the Armies are engaging, would it be a noble Exploit for him to win the Game, whiles his Army for want of conduct loſes the Victory? Will it be profitable for a Man to gain the World, and loſe his Soul? Let Conſcience anſwer in Truth.

'Tis obſervable what is reported of a † noble Forreigner, that reflecting upon his Birth-day, and the Age of his Life, he was ſurpriz'd with grief, and ſtruck with Aſtoniſhment, that without a due Sence of the proper Buſineſs and End of Life, he was arrived to that Age, when our Days begin to decline. In an inſtant all things ſeem'd to change appearance in his view. Then firſt (ſays he) I perceived I was a Man, for before

† *Cum natalis dies Februarii admoniſſet ætatis numerandæ, & triceſimo reperiſſem, invaſit me ſubita mœſtitia, & perculſit admirantem, quomodo ſine ſenſu quælibet ſit pituit. Viſa primum me ſenſit vitæ ad ejus culmen perveniſſem, à quo lux obſcurior, & dies noſtri ad occaſum inclinare incipiunt. Viſa eſt mihi rerum facies momento mutata, & tunc hominem agnovi.* Memoirs Chanut.

I had not reſolved for what I ſhould employ my Life. The iſſue was, his ſerious Reſolution unfeignedly to honour God, ſincerely to confeſs Chriſt, to place his Felicity in Holineſs of Life, and moſt zealouſly to follow it. Let any one that is not of a reprobate Mind, and an incorrigibly depraved Heart, duly conſider the ſublime and ſupernatural End of Man. O what a marvellous change will it make in him, of Carnal into Spiritual? nay it would be a kind of Miracle if he continued in his ſinful State. How will it transform him into another Man, with new Valuations, new Affections and Reſolutions, as if he were *born again* with a new Soul? How will it amaze him that his whole courſe has been a contradiction to the wiſe and gracious deſign of God, that all his Induſtry has been a race out of the way, a perpetual diverſion from his main Buſineſs, that his Life has been fruitleſs and dead to the true End of it? How will he be confounded at his former Folly? Then alone we act with Underſtanding, when mov'd by our bleſſed End, and our Actions by a ſtrict tendency without variation iſſue into it.

2. Con-

2. Conſider attentively the Objects that ſtand in competition for our Choice, the preſent World and Heaven, to make a judicious compariſon between them in their Quality and Duration.

Firſt, in their Quality. The things of the World, according to the judgment of God himſelf, who is only Wiſe and Good, and has the higheſt Authority to decide in the caſe, are but fallacious appearances of Happineſs, meer Vanity. And certainly the Creator knows the true worth of all things, and would not diſparage his own Works, but would undeceive Men that are apt to judge and chooſe by the Eye of Senſe. The Apoſtle tells us, *that an Idol is nothing in the World*; although the matter of it may be of Gold, or Marble, or Wood, yet it has no divine Perfection which the Idolater attributes to it. So all worldly things, in which Men place their chief Care and Confidence and Joy, though they have ſome degrees of Goodneſs, and are a tranſient relief to us in our paſſage to Eternity, yet they are nothing as to perfect Felicity. 'Tis meerly Opinion and Conceit that makes them ſo valued and pleaſing, like

like a rich Dye to a ſlight Stuff from whence its price ariſes. Reaſon is either obſcur'd, or not obeyed, when the World is the Object of our Choice. Now what are theſe appearances of Beauty and Pleaſure compar'd with a Bleſſedneſs that is truly infinite? Carnal Joy ſmiles in the Countenance, flatters the Fancy, touches the Senſe, but cannot fill the Heart, but the Favour of God ſatisfies the Soul. *Thou haſt put Gladneſs into my Heart, more than when their Corn and Wine increaſed.* Carnal Joy in its higheſt elevation in the time of the Harveſt and Vintage, is incomparably leſs than Spiritual Joy that ſprings from the Light of God's Countenance. The World cannot fill the narrow capacity of our Senſes, but divine Joys exceed our moſt inlarged comprehenſive Faculties. *The Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear with hearing; but the Peace of God paſſes all Underſtanding.* The Things of the World are of a limited Goodneſs, Wiſdom is not Strength, nor Learning Riches, nor Beauty Fruitfulneſs: But God is a Univerſal Good, in whom are all attractives to raiſe and ſatisfy our Deſires. If Men did conſider, they would diſtinguiſh

and deſpiſe in compariſon all that is named Felicity here, with the Favour of God. To ſeek for ſatisfaction in the Creature and forſake him, is as if one deſirous to ſee the Light ſhould withdraw from the preſence of the Sun, to borrow it from a weak Ray reflected by ſome obſcure matter. Now if there be ſo vaſt a difference in their Nature, as between a painted Vapour, and the ſolid glorious Good, between Finite and Infinite, why is there not a difference accordingly in our Eſteem, Affections and Reſpects to them? How unreaſonable is it that a Soul capable of God, ſhould cleave to the Duſt? It would be moſt egregious Folly to hang a Weight, that is able to turn a great Engine, upon a ſmall Clock: 'tis incomparably more Fooliſh, when the love of Happineſs, the Weight of Human Nature, which applied aright, will turn our Deſires to Heaven, is only uſed to give vigorous motion to our endeavours about earthly things.

2. Conſider their Duration. The Apoſtle tells us that the main *ſcope of his actions was things inviſible*; and gives the reaſon of it, *for the things that are ſeen are Temporal, and the things that are not ſeen*

ſeen are Eternal. To inſiſt upon the vaſt difference between temporal and eternal may ſeem needleſs: for the firſt notions of things are of ſuch uncontroulable Clearneſs, that an attempt to prove them, is to light a Candle to diſcover the Sun. Yet this principle drawing after it ſuch powerful Conſequences for the government of our Hearts and Lives, and Conſcience being ſo remiſs, and the ſenſual Affections ſo rebellious, 'tis needful to conſider this ſeriouſly, that what is really aſſented to in Speculation, may not be contradicted in Practice. Now who can unfold the infinite volume of Ages in Eternity? the Underſtanding of an Angel can no more comprehend what is incomprehenſible than the Mind of a Man. A Snail will paſs over an immenſe ſpace as ſoon as an Eagle: for though one diſpatches more way than the other, yet both are equally diſtant from arriving to the end of what is endleſs. But that the conception of Eternity may be more diſtinct, and affecting, it is uſeful to repreſent it under ſome temporal reſemblances, that ſenſibly though not fully expreſs it. Suppoſe that the vaſt Ocean were diſtilled drop by drop, but ſo

ſlowly that a thouſand years ſhould paſs between every drop, how many Millions of years were required to empty it? Suppoſe this great World in its full compaſs from one Pole to another, and from the top of the Firmanent to the bottom, were to be fill'd with the ſmalleſt Sand, but ſo ſlowly that every thouſand years only a ſingle Grain ſhould be added, how many Millions would paſs away before it were filled? If the immenſe Superficies of the Heavens, wherein are innumerable Starrs, the leaſt of which equals the magnitude of the Earth, were filled with Figures of Numbers without the leaſt vacant ſpace, and every Figure ſignified a Million, what created Mind could tell their Number, much leſs their Value? Having theſe Thoughts, I reply; the Sea will be emptied drop by drop, the Univerſe fill'd grain by grain, the Numbers written in the Heavens will come to an end, and how much of Eternity is then ſpent? Nothing; for ſtill infinitely more remains. In ſhort, what ever is temporal, extend the continuance of it to the utmoſt poſſibility of conception, is infinitely ſhort of Eternity. A Day, an Hour, a Minute, has ſome pro-

proportion with a thouſand years; for that duration is determined by a certain number of Days, and Hours, and Minutes: but Millions of Ages have no proportion to Eternity, becauſe 'tis an indeterminable Duration. The Mind is ſoon tir'd and loſt in ſearching after numbers to repreſent it: 'tis confounded and ſtruck with amazing Horror, and can only direct the Eye upward or downward to the two Habitations of Eternity, the glorious and the miſerable, Heaven and Hell. Now let us compare the Things of the preſent World with thoſe of the future State. The firſt are meaſur'd by flying Time, the other remain in an unmoveable Eternity. The Comforts that ſpring from the Earth, ſuddenly wither and fall to it: the Tree of Life flouriſhes only above. Frequent changes from Proſperity to Adverſity are the Properties of this mortal State. As thoſe who are in Voyages at Sea, ſometimes are in a calm and preſently ſuffer a ſtorm, and are forc'd to alter their courſe by the changing of the Winds. So 'tis with us in our paſſage here; but upon the firſt entrance into another World, all the variations of this are at an end. *Veri-*

ly every Man at his beſt eſtate is altogether Vanity. Surely every Man walks in a vain ſhew, ſurely they are diſquieted in vain. The viſible Felicity of Man is of no continuance. We may frequently obſerve in the Evening, a Cloud by the reflection of the Sun inveſted with ſo bright a Luſtre, and adorn'd with ſuch a pleaſant variety of Colours, that in the judgment of our Eyes, if an Angel were to aſſume a Body correſpondent to his Glory, it were a fit matter for it. But in walking a few Steps, the Sun is deſcended beneath the Horizon, and the Light withdrawn, and of all that ſplendid flaming appearance, nothing remains but a dark Vapour, that falls down in a Showre. Thus vaniſhing is the ſhew of Felicity here. In this, Senſe aſſiſts Faith; for the Experience of every day verifies what the Scripture declares, *that the faſhion of this World paſſes away.* And therefore the guilty folly of Men is aggravated, *to ſet their Eyes and Hearts upon that which is not.* To ſee one paſſionately dote on a Face ruin'd and deform'd with Age, to be inchanted without a Charm, raiſes wonder, and expoſes to contempt. Yet ſuch is the ſtupidity of Men to embrace with their

their moſt entire Affections the withred Vanities of the World, that are haſtening to their period. 'Twas a ſtinging reproach to Idolaters from God, *None conſiders in his Heart, neither is their Knowledg nor Underſtanding*, to ſay, *I have burnt part of it in the Fire, yea I have alſo baked Bread upon the Coals thereof, I have roaſted Fleſh and eaten it, and ſhall I make the reſidue an Abomination; ſhall I fall down to the ſtock of a Tree?* And are not ſenſual Men equally guilty of ſuch monſtrous Folly? for though univerſal Experience convince them, that all things under the Sun are fading, and that many times their deareſt Comforts are ſnatcht away from their Embraces, yet who does adviſedly conſider, and ſay to himſelf, ſhall I give my Heart to tranſient Shadows? ſhall I cheriſh vain hopes, vain aims and deſires of obtaining Happineſs in a periſhing World? Although the worſhipping a Stock be Idolatry of groſſer Infamy, yet 'tis as fooliſh and as deſtructive to ſet our chief Love and Joy, that is only due to God, upon the Creature. And what follows in the Prophet is juſtly applicable to ſuch Perſons; *He feedeth on Aſhes* (that not only afford no nouriſh-

ment, but is very hurtful to the Body) *a deceived Heart has turn'd him aſide, that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor ſay, is there not a Lye in my right Hand?* Thus carnal Men are ſo blinded with their Affections to theſe ſhort liv'd Pleaſures, that they cannot take the true liberty of judging and reflecting that they are deceived and delighted with empty Shadows that will ſuddenly end in diſappointment and ſorrow? Briefly, theſe glittering Fictions and falſe Joys cannot pleaſe without an error in the Mind, that ſhall laſt but a little while. And if you ſaw a diſtracted Perſon Sing and Dance, with a conceit that he is a Prince, would you be willing to loſe ſober Reaſon for his phantaſtick Pleaſure, eſpecially if you knew that his chearful fit ſhould ſuddenly change into a mournful or raging Madneſs for ever? But the Bleſſedneſs above is unchangeable as God the Author and Object of it, Eternal as the Soul that enjoys it. And ſhall the *World that paſſes away with the Luſts thereof, turn our Affections from the undefiled immortal Inheritance?* Shall the vaniſhing appearance, the fleeting Figure of Happineſs be preferred before what is ſubſtantial and durable?

able? Aſtoniſhing Madneſs! that God and Heaven ſhould be deſpiſed for painted Trifles. If a ſpark of true Reaſon, of ſincere Love to our Souls be left, *we ſhall count all things but droſs and dung, that we may gain the Kingdom of Glory.* Thus Eternity inlightens, thus it counſels us.

CHAP. XI.

Other Motives propounded. God deſires the Eternal Happineſs of Men. All that unfeignedly ſeek it, ſhall enjoy it. The terms are gracious and eaſy upon which 'tis offered to Men.

TO excite us further to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, I ſhall propound other Motives to Conſideration.

1. God is very willing that Men ſhould be ſaved and partake of his Glory. For this end, *he has brought Life and Immortality to light in the Goſpel.* The Lord Jeſus, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, has diſpel'd the darkneſs of the Gentiles, and the ſhadows of the Jews, and rendred the bleſſed and eternal State ſo clear and ſo viſible, that every Eye may ſee it. Our aſſurance of it is upon infallible Principles. And though the

the excellent Glory of it is inexpreſſible, yet 'tis repreſented under variety of fair and lovely Types to invite our Affections. Beſides, God makes an earneſt offer of Life to us in his Word, he Commands, Counſels, Excites, Urges, nay Intreats and Beſeeches with infinite Tenderneſs, that Men will accept of it. Thus the Apoſtle declares, *Now then we are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be reconciled to God.* Is it not evident then beyond the moſt jealous ſuſpicion, God is deſirous of our Happineſs? Can we imagine any deſign any inſincerity in his Words? Why ſhould Heaven court a Worm? 'Tis his love to Souls that expreſſes it ſelf in that condeſcending compaſſionate manner, to melt and overcome the perverſe and hardned in Sin.

And as his Words ſo his Works are a convincing Argument of his Will: His moſt gracious ſuſtaining and ſupporting of ſinful Men, his innumerable Benefits conferr'd upon them, in the proviſion of Good, and preſervation from Evil, are for this End, that by the conduct of his merciful Providence they may be led to Repentance, and received to in-

Grace. And the temporal Judgments inflicted on Sinners, are medecinal in their Nature, and in his deſign to bring them to a ſight and abhorrence of Sin, to prevent their final ruin: if they prove mortal to any, 'tis from their obſtinate Corruption. The time allowed to thoſe who are obnoxious to his Juſtice every hour, is not a meer reprieve from Torment, but a ſpace of Repentance to ſue out a Pardon: They are ſpared in order to Salvation. *The Lord is long-ſuffering to usward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.

But above all his other Works, the giving of his Son to be a Sacrifice for Sin, is an incomparable demonſtration, how much he delights in the Salvation of Men. Since God has been at ſuch coſt to put them into a capacity of obtaining the Kingdom of unchangeable Glory, far tranſcending the earthly Paradiſe that was forfeited by Sin, we have the ſtrongeſt aſſurance that he deſires their Felicity. And how guilty and miſerable will thoſe Sinners be that when Chriſt has opened Heaven to us by his Blood, refuſe to enter into it. When *Brutus* propounded to a Philoſopher his deſign to reſtore *Rome* to Liberty,

berty, he replied, That the action would be glorious indeed, but that ſo many ſervile Spirits that tamely ſtoopt under Tyranny, were not worthy that a Man of Vertue and Courage ſhould hazard himſelf to recover that for them, which they did ſo lightly eſteem. The Redemption of Mankind is without controverſy the moſt glorious work of God, wherein the concurrence and concord of his Attributes appear in that excellent manner, that only his miraculous Wiſdom could find out. But how aſtoniſhing is the unworthineſs of Men, who wretchedly neglect Salvation, which the Son of God purchaſed by a Life full of Sorrows, and a Death of infinite Sufferings? Bleſſed Redeemer! may it be ſpoken with the humble affectionate and thankful ſence of thy dying Love, why didſt thou give thy ſelf a ranſom for thoſe who are charm'd with their Miſery, and with the moſt foul Ingratitude diſvalue ſo precious a Redemption? How juſtly ſhall they be for ever deprived of it? *Behold, ye diſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.*

2. Conſider, this glorious Bleſſedneſs ſhall be the Portion of all that unfeignedly chooſe it, and earneſtly ſeek it.

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This motive was incloſed in the firſt, but deſerves a ſeparate Conſideration. And of this we have infallible aſſurance from the Word of God, *who cannot lye. Godlineſs has the Promiſe of the Life to come. This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation.* The hope of a Chriſtian is ſo certain that 'tis compar'd to *an Anchor faſtned in Heaven.* And beſides the Fidelity of his Word, God has given us Security of the Reward, the Life of his Son. This methinks ſhould turn the Current of our Deſires and Endeavours to Heaven. For notwithſtanding all our toil and ſweat, the labour of the Day and the watchings of the Night for the obtaining earthly things, yet we many times fall ſhort of our aims and hopes. 'Twas the obſervation of the wiſeſt Man, *I returned and ſaw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wiſe, nor yet Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to all.* Indeed ſuch is the order of Divine Providence in the World, there muſt be different conditions of Men here, ſome Rich, others Poor, ſome Noble, others Mean,

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ſome in Command others in Subjection. And from hence it is alſo evident, that neither Dignity nor Riches nor Pleaſures are the Happineſs of Man. For 'tis not becoming the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to make that the laſt end of the reaſonable Creature, which though ſought with Sincerity and Diligence, may not be obtained, or of which without his own conſent he may be deprived. But civil diſtinctions and qualities are of no value and conſideration with reſpect to the obtaining or excluding from Heaven. The rich and honourable that are in an exalted State, have not a more eaſy aſcent and entrance into the Kingdom of God than thoſe who are in the loweſt degree. The Starrs appear with the ſame bigneſs to him that ſtands in the deepeſt Valley as on the higheſt Hill. Is there any difference between the Souls of the rich and great in the World, and the Souls of the poor and deſpiſed? are they not equally the Off-ſpring of God, and equally ranſomed by the moſt precious Blood of his Son? are they not equally capable of Eternal Rewards? are not the Promiſes of the heavenly Kingdom, equally addreſt to every one that has

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an immortal Soul, that is faithful to his Duty and Covenant with God. This ſhould inſpire all with flaming Deſires, and draw forth their utmoſt Induſtry, *and make them ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always to abound in the Work of the Lord, knowing our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* I know the carnal Will is impetuous and impatient of delay; and earneſt for what is preſent with the neglect of the future Glory. But the unreaſonableneſs of this is evident to all, for 'tis not a new and ſtrange thing to ſow in hopes of reaping a Harveſt, for Men to be induſtrious and active on Land and Sea for future Advantage. Nay 'tis the conſtant practice of the World: The Merchant, the Huſbandman, the Student, the Souldier, and every Man in the circle of his Calling are viſible inſtances of this; and though many times the moſt flouriſhing hopes are blaſted, they are not diſcouraged. And is it not a ſight full of wonder to obſerve Men chearful in Labours and Hardſhips in the Service of the World, to carry it ſo lightly as if they had Wings, and all for a poor and uncertain Recompence, and to be ſlow and languid in their endeavours for a Reward

ward as great and as sure as God is glorious and true? How many ambitiously strive to please a Prince, and wait long in his service, who is but a Man, and therefore variable in his Temper and State, sometimes is not willing to do what he can, and sometimes cannot do what he would to reward his Servants? and is there not infinitely more reason we should labour to please God, who is the most liberal, and rich, and *certain Rewarder of all that seek him?*

3. Consider, How gracious the terms are upon which Heaven is promised in the Gospel. Our Saviour's Laws are so holy, just, and in their own Nature so good to Men, even in their present performance, that their own excellence and equity and sweetness is sufficient to recommend them without a respect to the glorious Reward of Obedience. For what can be more desireable than conformity to the Nature of the blessed God? What Pleasure is comparable to that which springs from a pure Conscience, from a godly righteous and sober Conversation? How joyful is the performance of that Service which more immediately is directed to the honour

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of the Divine Majesty? in Prayer and other sacred actions we draw near to the Fountain of Felicity, and receive from his fulness. In the affectionate Praises of God we are Companions of the Angels. And is not Integrity and Honesty in our dealings with Men more easy and comfortable than Fraud and Oppression? Is it not troublesome to be always under a Mask, to use arts and disguises to avoid the reproach and revenge that attends unjust actions when discovered? Are Temperance and Chastity as hurtful to the Body, as Luxury and Lasciviousness the essential parts of carnal Felicity? How miserably distracted is Man when the Heart is rent with numberless Vanities, the Affections divided between various Objects! how quiet and composed, when the Heart is united to God as the supream Good, and the Affections joyfully conspire in his Service! Can it then be pretended that the Yoke of Christ is heavy, and his Law hard? Or are his Promises uncertain, and his Reward small? No, *his Commands are not grievous; in the keeping them there is a great Reward*, a present Paradise. Religion will make us happy hereafter in the enjoyment of

God, and happy here in Obedience to his Holy Will. Such is his Goodneſs that our Duty and Happineſs are the ſame.

But it will be ſaid, that the Goſpel requires *us to pluck out the right Eye, and to cut off the right Hand, and to take up the Croſs of Chriſt, that is, to mortify the deareſt Luſts, and to ſubmit to the ſharpeſt Sufferings for his Honour that we may be eternally Happy.* To this I anſwer.

'Tis true, the human Nature in this depraved State, only reliſhes ſuch Objects as pleaſantly inſinuate with the carnal Senſes, and 'tis bitter as Death to bind up the Affections from them. But Grace gives a *new divine Nature to the Soul*, and makes it eaſy to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts. To make this more clear by a ſenſible Inſtance: Suppoſe a diſeaſed Perſon whoſe Stomach is oppreſt with corrupt Humours, and his Throat and Mouth ſo heated with Choller and continual Thirſt, that he thinks it impoſſible, though for his Life, to abſtain from immoderate Drinking. If a Phyſician by ſome powerful Medicine cleanſes the Stomach, and tempers the internal heat, he then can eaſily reſtrain himſelf from Exceſs. Thus a carnal Man that is full

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of false Estimations, and irregular Desires, while there are Pleasures without, and Passions unsubdued within, though his Salvation depends on it, thinks it impossible to restrain the exorbitant Appetites of Flesh and Blood. The *Gentiles thought it strange, Christians did not run with them to the same excess of Riot.* But Divine Grace so clarifies and inlightens the Mind, so purifies and elevates the Affections, that 'tis not only possible but easy to abstain from unlawful Pleasures. St. *Austin* before his Conversion was astonisht that many in the vigour of Youth, and in a frail World lived Chastly; and reflecting upon himself, was encouraged by this Thought, that which such and such observe, why shall it be impossible to me to observe? and upon serious trial, by the prosperous influence of Heaven, was a Conqueror over all carnal Temptations. Nay after his holy Change, the withholding his Heart from vitious Delights, was inexpressibly more sweet than his former enjoying of them. And are there not many visible examples of holy heavenly Christians, to whom grosser sensual Pleasures are unsavory and contemptible? You may as well tell the number

Quam suave carere: suavitatibus istis?

of the Stars, as of those who have practised Religion in its strictness and purity, and by their enlightned Conversations directed us in the way to Heaven. And are their Bodies taken from the Vein of a Rock, and not composed of Flesh and Blood as well as others? Are their Passions, like *Solomon*'s brazen Sea, unmoveable by any Winds of Temptations? Are they entirely exempted from the impression of Objects, and the lower Affections? No, they are alive, and sensible of those things that ravish the Affections of carnal Men, but by the power of Grace despise and overcome them. And this Grace is offered in the Gospel to all that sincerely desire it, so that 'tis a vain wretched pretence that Religion binds to hard Service.

To the other part of the Objection, that sometimes Religion exposes the Professors of it to heavy Sufferings. I answer, Indeed the Gospel is plain and peremptory in this, if we will *reign with Christ, we must suffer with him*, when we are called forth to give a noble testimony to his Truth. 'Tis no extraordinary Elevation, no point of Perfection, but the duty of every Christian to be always ready in the disposition and reso-

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lution of his Mind, and by actual Martyrdom to ſacrifice his Life, when the honour of Chriſt requires it. But 'tis no hard condition to ſuffer tranſient Afflictions for the obtaining a Happy Immortality, to be conformable to the Image of our ſuffering Redeemer, that we may be crowned with his Glory. How many Chriſtians eſteemed themſelves honoured in the Diſgrace, and bleſſed in the Injuries they ſuffered for Chriſt, and with an invincible Patience, and aſtoniſhing Joy, endured the moſt cruel Perſecutions, though yet the human Nature in them was as tender and ſenſible of Pains as in others: but the natural averſion and repugnance to ſuffering was overruled by the determination of the rational Will, upon the account of their Duty, and the Reward attending it. They gave a moſt convincing ſenſible Teſtimony how much more valuable Heaven is than this preſent World, willingly expoſing themſelves to all Evil here, *and rejoycing in hope* of a glorious iſſue.

In ſhort, the Reward of Obedience is a triumphal Crown; and where there is no Victory there can be no Triumph; and where no Combate no Victory;

and where no Enemy, no Combate. Therefore we are commanded to fight againſt our internal Enemies, our corrupt Affections, to kill the Luſts of the Fleſh, and to encounter and overcome by Humility and meek Submiſſions the cruelty of malicious Enemies without us, in a direct order of obtaining the Crown of Life. And a Believer that has Heaven in taſte and expectation, will eaſily renounce the moſt pleaſant, and willingly endure the ſharpeſt Temptations, for the bleſſed Reward of his Obedience.

CHAP

CHAP. XII.

The Goſpel threatens Hell to all that prefer the Pleaſures of Sin before Heaven. How congruous and powerful a Motive this is to work on carnal Men. The Miſery of an everlaſting Hell repreſented.

4. CONſider, if Men chooſe the Pleaſures of Sin that are but for a ſeaſon, before Heaven, that infinitely exceeds this World, then an everlaſting Hell ſhall be their Portion. There is no middle State in the next World, no tolerable mediocrity, but two contrary States, yet alike in this, that the Happineſs and Miſery are equally Infinite and Eternal. And by the moſt wiſe righteous Will of God, there is an inſeparable connexion between the Choice and Actions of Men here, and their future Condition for ever. The equity of this cannot be denied without renouncing the Light of Reaſon. For when by a Chain of Conſequences ſinful Pleaſures are linked with eternal Puniſhments threatned in the Divine Law, he that will enjoy thoſe forbidden Plea-

ſures, binds himſelf to ſuffer all the pains annexed to them. And 'tis juſt that thoſe who err without Excuſe, ſhould repent without Remedy. Now the threatning of eternal Punishment is the moſt proper Argument to work on carnal ſecure Sinners.

1. Becauſe they are more capable to conceive of the Torments of Hell, than the Joys of Heaven. Storms and Darkneſs are more eaſily drawn by a Pencil, than a calm bright Day. Fire and Brimſtone are very painful to Senſe, and the imagination ſtrongly repreſents its vehemence in tormenting the Body, and what an evil the unceſſant remorſe of the guilty Conſcience will be hereafter, is in part underſtood by the ſecret accuſations and twinges of ſelf-condemning Sinners here: but they are abſolutely Strangers to the Joys of the Holy Ghoſt, the Delights of the Soul in the Contemplation and Love of God, the peace and contentment of Conſcience in his Favour. They cannot without Experience know how good the Lord is, no *more than ſee a taſte.* To diſcourſe to them of the Spiritual Pleaſures that flow from the divine Preſence, of the Happineſs of the Saints *that are be-*

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fore the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple, is to ſpeak with the Tongue of an Angel unintelligible things. Their Affections and Minds and Language are confined to ſenſible things. *The natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* There may be in a carnal Perſon a conception of Heaven as a Refuge from Miſeries, and ſome ſmothering confuſed thoughts of its Felicity, as the Idea of Light and Colours in one Blind from his Birth; but only the pure in Heart *can ſee God*, as in the perfect Viſion of Glory in Heaven, ſo in the imperfect reflection of it in the Goſpel.

Si frigido loquar neſcit quod loquor. Aug.

2. Carnal Men are more diſpoſed to be wrought upon by repreſenting the Torments of Hell, than the Joys of Heaven. For we cannot love but what is known, nor enjoy but what is loved. And as the purification of the Heart from vicious Affections, is the beſt means to clear the Mind, ſo the illuſtration of the Mind is very influential to warn the Heart. The true conception of Heaven in its amiable Excellencies,

cies, would convey such a sweetness as to change Hatred it self into Love; and of this only prepared Souls are capable. But those who are sunk into Sense are without relish of spiritual Felicity, and are either allured or terrified only with that is pleasant or painful to Sense.

Identidem dicitans, qualis artifex pereo. Suet.

'Tis recorded as the unparallel'd Folly of *Nero*, that when he was ready to cut his own Throat to avoid the fury of the Multitude, he broke forth into great expressions of Sorrow what an excellent Artist he died. 'Twas not the loss of the *Roman* Empire that so much troubled him, as that so much skill in Musick died with him. He valued himself more as a Fidler than an Emperor. Thus carnal Men with a folly infinitely more prodigious, when Death is near, are not so much affected with the loss of the Crown of Glory, and the Kingdom of Heaven, as with their leaving the present World and its Vanities. This makes Death intolerably bitter. Till the Love of God inflames and purifies the Heart, the fruition of his Glory is not esteemed nor desired. A Seraphim sent from the Presence of God with a flaming Coal from the Altar, toucht the Lips of the Holy Prophet, and his Heart

Heart was presently melted into a compliance with the Divine Will. But if a Rebel Angel, that burns with another Fire than of Divine Love, were dispatcht from Hell, with a Coal from that Altar, where so many Victims are offered to divine Justice as there are damned Souls, and touch'd obdurate unreformed Sinners, that they might have a lively sence what it is to burn for ever; this were the most congruous and effectual way to reclaim them. Like stubborn Metals they are only made pliant by the Fire.

Indeed the fear of Hell though raised to the highest degrees, is not sufficient to convert a Sinner thorowly to God. For that Religion that is the meer effect of Fear, will be according to the nature of its Principle, with resistance and trouble, wavering and inconstant when the violence of the fear is lessen'd. Whereas that which is from the inclination of Love and the hope of a desired Good, is fully voluntary and persevering. As a Scholar that applies himself to Learning by the constraint of Fear, his Study is uneasy, and whilst he is reading, his Fancy transports him to other things, and when his task is finisht, he

he preſently runs to Play. But a Lover of Learning with Diligence and Delight is intent in his Studies, and though ingaged in other Affairs, yet his Thoughts are ſtill converſant about Learning. In ſhort, the fear of Hell may be only a natural Affection, that recoils from what is tormenting to the Body, and is conſiſtent with the Love of Sin; but the hope of Heaven as 'tis revealed in the Scripture, is a ſpiritual Affection, and always joined with the hatred of Sin.

Niſi timore incipiat homo Deum colere, non perveniet ad amorem. Aug.

Now the great deſign of the Goſpel is by the fear of Hell, as a powerful preparative, to make way for the love of Heaven. If carnal indulgent Sinners are not rouſed by a quick apprehenſion of Hell, they will ſecurely enjoy their pernicious Pleaſures, and grow old in Sin, and at laſt die impenitent. No offers of Mercy will prevail, till they are ſtorm'd by the Terrors of the Lord. But when the fear of eternal Miſery has made a breach, divine Grace victoriouſly enters and takes Poſſeſſion. The convinced and contrite Sinner moſt humbly and willingly embraces the precious Promiſes, wherein not only Pardon and Indemnity is offered, but the richeſt favour, the advancing him into

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a State of Eternal Glory. Thus the ſweeteſt Hopes ſucceed tormenting Fears, and the Obedience which before had a mixture of involuntary flows from the intire conſent of the Soul, with filial Freedom.

Before the particular Deſcription of the pains of the Damned, I ſhall obſerve in General, That the full repreſentation of Hell is beyond all human Expreſſion, nay our moſt fearful Thoughts cannot equal the Horror of it. *Who knows the Power of thine Anger?* What are the prepared Plagues by infinite Juſtice and Almighty Wrath for obſtinate Sinners? It is impoſſible for the moſt guilty and trembling Conſcience to inlarge its ſad apprehenſions according to the degrees of that Miſery. *The Lord will ſhew forth his Wrath, and make his Power known in the Veſſels fitted for Deſtruction.* None can tell what God can do, and what Man ſhall ſuffer, when made capable to endure ſuch Torments for ever, as now would preſently conſume him. As the Glory of Heaven cannot be fully underſtood till enjoyed, ſo the Torments of Hell cannot be comprehended till felt. But we may have ſome diſcovery of thoſe unknown Terrors, by the following Conſiderations. 1. The

Pſal. 90. 11.

Rom. 9. 22.

1. The Wiſdom of God requires that the Puniſhment threatned in his Law, as it muſt ſo be firmly decreed, that all obſtinate Rebels ſhall of neceſſity undergo it, ſo it muſt incomparably exceed all temporal Evils, to which Men may be expoſed for their Obedience to the divine Commands. Otherwiſe the threatning would not be an effectual reſtraint from Sin. For the propinquity of an Evil makes a ſtrange impreſſion on the Mind, and preſent Fear makes a Perſon ſollicitous to avoid the incurſion of a danger ready to ſeize on him, without forecaſting to prevent an evil look'd on at a diſtance. Therefore that the ſanction of the divine Law may preſerve the Precepts inviolable, that there may be a continual reverence of it, and a fixed reſolution in the Heart of Men not to tranſgreſs, the penaly threatned muſt be in its own nature ſo terrible, that the fear of it may conquer the apprehenſion of all preſent Evils, that can be inflicted to force us to Sin. As on the other ſide, to confirm our purpoſe to pleaſe God in all things, the Reward of Obedience muſt be of infallible aſſurance, that all and only thoſe who ſerve him faithfully ſhall enjoy in the future State,

State, and ſo excellent, that all the allurements of the World, may in compariſon with it, be of no conſideration to divert us from our Duty. They command the Heart, and have its moſt prevailing Reſpects, from whom is expected the moſt deſireable Good, and feared the moſt terrible Evils. Therefore our Saviour warns his Diſciples, *Fear not them that can kill the Body*, (make that part die that is mortal) *but fear him that after he has killed, has power to caſt into Hell, yea I ſay unto you, fear him.* All the exquiſite Tortures, that the moſt cruel contriving and powerful malice of wicked Men can inflict, is ſo much leſs than the Wrath to come, that avoid the one and venture on the other,: is more brutiſh Stupidity, than that of the Horſe or Mule, that ſtarts at the ſhadow of a Buſh, and ſprings over a Precipice.

2. The Judgments of God executed here, are light and tolerable in compariſon of the puniſhment of Sinners in the next Life. 1. Temporal Evils of all kinds and degrees, as Peſtilence, Famine, War, are deſigned for the bringing of Men to a ſight and ſence of their Sins, and are common to Good and Bad here.

here. And if his anger be ſo terrible when he chaſtiſes as a compaſſionate Father, what is his fury when he puniſhes as a ſevere Judg? If the correcting Remedies ordered by his Wiſdom and Love for the converſion of Sinners be ſo ſharp, what is the deadly revenge of his irreconcileable Hatred?

2. The Miſeries of the preſent State are allayed with ſome enjoyments. None are ſo univerſally afflicted, ſo deſolate, but ſomething remains to ſweeten the ſence of their Sufferings. Judgments are tempered with Mercies. No Man is tortur'd with all Diſeaſes, nor forſaken of all Friends, nor utterly without Comfort. And when the Affliction is irremediable, yet if our grief produces Sympathy in others, 'tis ſome eaſe to the troubled Mind, and by that aſſiſtance the Burthen is made lighter. But in Hell the Damned are ſurrounded with Terrors, encompaſt with Flames, without any thing to refreſh their Sorrows, not a drop of Water to a Lake of Fire. All that was eſteemed Felicity here, is totally withdrawn. Death puts a period to their Lives, and the Pleaſures of Sin for ever. For 'tis moſt juſt, that thoſe Objects which were abuſed by their Luſts,

Luſts, and alienated their Hearts from their Duty and Felicity, ſhould be taken away. And which is extream Miſery, in their moſt pitiful State they are abſolutely unpitied. Pity is the cheap and univerſal Lenitive, not denied to the moſt guilty in their Sufferings here: for the Law of Nature inſtructs us to pity the Man, when the Malefactor ſuffers. But even this is not afforded to the Damned. All their Agonies and Crys cannot incline the Compaſſion of God, and the bleſſed Spirits in Heaven towards them: for they are not compaſſionable Objects, their Miſery being the juſt effect of their perverſe obſtinate Choice. And in Hell all human tender Affections are extinguiſht for ever. Now 'tis the perfection of Miſery, the exceſs of deſolation to be deprived of all good things pleaſing to our Deſires, and to ſuffer all Evils from which we have the deepeſt averſation and abhorrence. As in Heaven all good is eminently compriſed, and nothing but Good, ſo in Hell all Evil is in exceſſive degrees, and nothing but Evil.

3. Temporal Evils are inflicted by the mediation of ſecond cauſes that are of a limited power to hurt: but in the

next World he more immediately torments the Damned by his abſolute Power. The Apoſtle tells us, that the wicked *are puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.* What is the laſhing with a few Ruſhes, to a blow given by the hand of a Giant that ſtrikes dead at once? This compariſon is below the Truth.

2 Theſſ. 1.

More particularly, the ſtate of Miſery is ſet forth in Scripture by ſuch repreſentations as may powerfully inſtruct and terrifie even the moſt carnal Men. Nothing is more intolerably painful, then ſuffering the violence of Fire inraged with Brimſtone: and Hell is deſcribed by a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, wherein the Wicked are tormented. Whether the Fire be Material or Metaphorical, the reality and intenſeneſs of the Torment is ſignified by it.

Indeed it is difficult to conceive how a material Fire can act on a ſpiritual Subſtance. But 'tis unreaſonable to determine that it is impoſſible. For if we conſider what pain is, it is as conceiveable how pure Spirits are capable of it, as Spirits in Conjunction with Bodies. The human Soul in its Nature is Spiritual as the Angels, yet has a painful ſence of Fire or other afflicting Evils incumbent on the Sences. The Body meerly feels not pain, but it paſſes through the Body to the Soul. If the Soul by a ſtrong diverſion of Thoughts apply it ſelf to an Object, the Body is inſenſible of pain, as is evident in ſome Diſeaſes; and that in the heat of Battel, deep Wounds are not felt. And as God by a natural Conſtitution has ordered, that the Body ſo touch'd and moved, excites a painful Senſe in the Soul, he may have ordained that the Devils ſhall feel the impreſſions of Material Fire, in the places to which they ſhall be confin'd.

But

But the ordinary Fire, though mingled with the moſt torturing Ingredients, is not an adequate repreſentation of it. For that is prepared by Men, but the Fire of Hell is prepared by the Wrath of God for the Devil and his Angels. The Divine Power is illuſtriouſly manifeſted in that terrible preparation: So that, as ſome of the Fathers expreſs it, if one of the Damned might paſs from thoſe Flames into the fierceſt Fires here, it were to exchange a Torment for a Refreſhment. The Scripture ſpeaks of the vehement heat and fiery Thirſt, and outer Darkneſs in which the Damned ſuffer, to ſatisfy the rights of Juſtice in the torment of thoſe Senſes, for the Pleaſure of which Men wilfully broke the Laws of God.

But the Soul being the chief Sinner, ſhall be the chief Mourner in thoſe Regions of Sorrow. An Image of this we have in the Agonies of Spirit, which ſometimes the Saints themſelves are in here, and which the moſt ſtubborn Sinners can neither reſiſt nor endure. *Job* was afflicted in that manner that he complains, *The Arrows of the Almighty are with me, the Poiſon whereof drinks up my Spirit, the Terrors of God ſet themſelves* Job. 6. 4.

in Array againſt me. If a Spark of his Diſpleaſure falls on the guilty Conſcience, it tears and blows up all, as a Fire-ball caſt into a Magazine. All the Diverſions in the World, Buſineſs, Pleaſures, Merry Converſation, Comedies are as ineffectual to give freedom from thoſe Stings and Furies in the Breaſt, as the ſprinkling of Holy Water is to expel a raging Divil from a poſſeſt Perſon. Thoſe who in their Pride and Jollity, have deſpiſed ſerious Religion, either as a fond Tranſport and Extaſy towards God, or a dull Melancholy and Dejection about the Soul, or an idle Scrupuloſity about indifferent things, yet when God has ſet their Sins with all their killing circumſtances in order before their Eyes, how changed, how confounded are they at that Apparition? How reſtleſs with the dreadful expectation of the doom that attends them! *Belſhazzer* in the midſt of his Cups, and Herd of Concubines, by a few Words written on the Wall, containing his Proceſs and Judgment, was ſo terrified by his guilty jealous Conſcience, that his Joints were looſed, Nature ſunk under the apprehenſion. Now all theſe troubles of Mind, are but

the

the beginnings of Sorrows, but the Smoak of the infernal Fornace, but earneſts of that terrible Sum which divine Juſtice will ſeverely exact of the Wicked in Hell.

Indeed theſe Examples are rare, and not regarded by the moſt, and by ſome lookt on as the effects of Diſtraction; but to convince the bold and careleſs Sinners who never felt the ſtings of an awakned Conſcience, what extream terrors ſeize upon the Wicked in the other World, Conſider,

1. The Apprehenſion ſhall be more clear and enlarged than in the preſent State. Now the Soul is oppreſt with a weight of Clay, and in Drowſineſs and Obſcurity. The great things of Eternity are of little force to convince the Conſcience, or perſwade the Affections. But then the Soul ſhall work with the quickeſt activity. The Mind ſhall by an irreſiſtible Light take a full view of all afflicting Objects. The moſt ſtupid and unconcerned Sinners ſhall then ſee and feel their ruin'd State, what a glorious Felicity they have loſt, what a Miſery they are plunged into, without any poſſibility of leſſening it by falſe Conceits, and receiving any relief by

the error of Imagination.

2. The mournful Thoughts ſhall be always fixt upon what is tormenting. The Soul in conjunction with the Body cannot always apply it ſelf to one ſort of Objects. For the Miniſtry of the ſenſible Faculties is requiſite to its Operations. And the Body muſt be ſupported by Eating and Drinking and Reſt, which interrupts troubleſome Thoughts. Beſides the variety of Objects and Accidents here avert the Mind ſometimes from what is afflicting. But the ſeparate Soul is in no dependence on the Body, and after their reunion, there ſhall be no neceſſity of Food or Sleep, or any other animal actions to ſupport it, but it ſhall be reſtored to a new capacity for new torments, and preſerved in that miſerable State by the power of God. There will be nothing then to divert the loſt Soul from ſad Reflections upon its Miſery. There are no lucid intervals in Hell.

3. All the paſſionate Powers will then be let looſe at once upon the guilty Creature. And if there be no ſingle Paſſion ſo weak, but heightned, will break the Spirit, and render Life ſo miſerable, that a Man will take Sanctu-

ary

ary in the Grave to escape, how miserable is the Condition when the most fierce and united Passions war against the Soul? This is signified by the never dying Worm that gnaws on the tenderest parts, and of quickest sence. Shame, Sorrow, Despair, Fury, Hatred and Revenge are some of that Blood of Vipers that torment the Damned.

1. Shame is a Passion of which human Nature is very sensible, and this in the highest degree of Confusion shall seize on the Wicked. For all the just causes of Shame shall then meet. The inward source of it is the consciousness of Guilt, or Turpitude and Folly in the Actions; and all these are the inseparable Adjuncts of Sin. The guilty Soul by a piercing reflection upon its Crimes, has a secret shame of its Degeneracy and Unworthiness. The Passion is increast, when a discovery is made of vile practices that defile and debase a Man, expose to Contempt and Infamy, before Persons of high Quality and eminent Vertue, whom we admire and reverence, and whose esteem we value. To be surprized in an unworthy Action by such a Person, disorders the Blood, and transfuses a Colour into the Face, to

Dan. 12. 2.

Tacitâ sudant præcordia culpa. Juv.

cover it with a Vail of Bluſhing. And the more numerous the Spectators are, the more the Diſgrace is aggravated. And if Deriſion be joined with the Ignominy, it cauſes extream Diſpleaſure. O the univerſal Confuſion, the overpowring amazement that will ſeiſe on Sinners in the great day of Diſcovery, when all the Works of Darkneſs, all their baſe Senſualities ſhall be revealed before God Angels and Saints? When all the covers of Shame ſhall be taken off, the excuſes and denials, to extenuate or conceal their Sins ſhall vaniſh, and their Breaſts be tranſparent to the Eyes of all: How will they be aſhamed of their foul and permanent Deformity in the Light of that glorious Preſence? How will they be aſtoniſht to appear in all their Pollutions before that bright and immenſe Theatre? How will they be confounded to ſtand in all their Guilt before that ſublime and ſevere Tribunal? How will they endure the upbraidings for all the Sins which they have ſo wickedly committed, and the deriſion for the puniſhment they ſo deſervedly ſuffer? The holy Judg will *laugh at their Calamity, and mock when their fear comes. The Righteous alſo*

ſhall

ſhall ſee, and ſhall laugh at them, Lo theſe are the Men that made not God their Portion, but periſhing Vanities, that prefer'd ſweet Folly before ſevere Wiſdom. The Devils will reproach them for that ſcornful advantage they had over them, that as Children are ſeduc'd for things of Luſtre to part with real Treaſures, ſo they were eaſily perſuaded for the Trifles of Time to exchange Eternal Happineſs. *Whither will they cauſe their Shame to go?* Thoſe black Sinners that here never change colour for their Filthineſs, that hardned by cuſtom in Sin, are impenetrable to Shame, as the brute Beaſts that are abſolutely deſtitute of reaſon, nay that have not only overcome all tenderneſs, but *glory in their Shame,* ſhall glow at the manifeſtation of their ſordid Luſts, their vile Servilities, and be covered with Confuſion, and the ſence of it ſhall be revived in their Minds for ever. *Jer.* 14. 12.

2. To open Shame is joined the greateſt inward Sorrow. This Paſſion when violent penetrates the Soul in all its Faculties, and faſtens it to the afflicting Object. When it dwells in the Boſom, it gives an eaſy entrance to what ever cheriſhes and increaſes it, and

and rejects what might aſſwage and leſſen the ſence of the Evil. The moſt pleaſant things do not excite deſire or joy, but exaſperate Grief. Like thoſe Animals that convert the beſt nouriſhment into their own Poiſon; ſo deep Sorrow receives mournful impreſſions from all things, and turns the ſweeteſt Comforts of Life into Wormwood and Gall. The cauſes of Sorrow are either the loſs of ſome valued Good, or the ſence of ſome preſent Evil. And the Sorrow is more violent, as the Cauſe is great in it ſelf, and in the apprehenſion and tenderneſs of the Sufferers. Now both theſe Cauſes with all the heavy Circumſtances that can multiply and aggravate Sorrow, meet in Hell the Centre of Miſery.

The loſs is inconceivably great. If *Cain* when baniſht from the Society of the Saints, where God was publickly worſhipt, and by ſpiritual Revelations and viſible Apparitions, graciouſly made himſelf known, cry'd out in anguiſh of Soul, *My puniſhment is greater than I can bear, from thy Face ſhall I be hid, and I ſhall be a Fugitive upon the Earth*, how intolerable will be the final ſeparation from his glorious and joyful Preſence? 'Tis often

often ſeen how tenderly and impatiently the human Spirit reſents the loſs of a dear Relation. *Jacob* for the ſuppoſed Death of *Joſeph*, was ſo overcome with Grief, *that when all his Sons and Daughters roſe up to comfort him, he refuſed to be comforted, and ſaid, I will go down to the Grave unto my Son mourning.* This is a Sin and a puniſhment. 'Tis eſtabliſht by the righteous and unchangeable Decree of God, that every inordinate Affection in Man ſhould be his own Tormentor. But if the loſs of a poor frail Creature for a ſhort time be ſo afflicting, how inſupportable will be the Sorrow, for the loſs of an infinite Eternal Good? It may be a carnal Wretch may think comfortably of this now, whilſt he lives in Pleaſures, but in the next World he ſhall be totally deprived of all things that pleaſe his voluptuous Senſes, and ſhall underſtand what a miſery it is to loſe the favour and enjoyment of the bleſſed God. Our Saviour told the Jews, *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth* (the Symptoms of extreme Sorrow) *when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you your ſelves thruſt out.* The ſight

Juſtiſti Domine & ſic eſt, ut pœna ſit ſibi omnis inordinatus affectus. Aug.

ſight of that bleſſed Company entring into the ſacred Manſions of Light, will make the loſs of Heaven infinitely more diſcernable and terrible to the Wicked, who ſhall be caſt into *outer Darkneſs*, and for ever be deprived of Communion with God and his Saints.

With the loſs of the moſt excellent Good, the ſuffering of the moſt afflicting painful Evil is join'd. The Sentence is, *Depart ye curſed into everlaſting Fire.* And if an imaginary Sorrow conceived in the Mind without a real external Cauſe, as in Melancholly Perſons, when groſs Vapours darken and corrupt the brightneſs and purity of the Spirits that are requiſite for its chearful Operations, is often ſo oppreſſing that Nature ſinks under it, how inſupportable will the Sorrow of condemned Sinners be, under the impreſſion and ſence of God's Almighty and avenging Hand, when it ſhall fully appear how pure and holy he is in his Anger for Sin, how juſt and dreadful in puniſhing Sinners? It may be the indulgent Sinner may leſſen his fear of Hell, by fancying the number of Sufferers will aſſwage the ſence of their Miſery. But this is a fooliſh miſtake. For the number of Sufferers ſhall be ſo far

far from affording any relief, that the Miſery is aggravated by the Company and Communication of the Miſerable. Every one is ſurrounded with Sorrows, and by the ſights of Woe about him, feels the univerſal Grief. The weeping and wailing, the cries and dolorous expreſſions of all the Damned, increaſes the torment and vexation of every one. As when the Wind conſpires with the Flame 'tis more fierce and ſpreading.

3. The Concomitant of Sorrow will be Fury and Rage againſt themſelves, as the true cauſes of their Miſery. For God will make ſuch a diſcovery of his righteous Judgment, that not only the Saints ſhall glorify his Juſtice in the condemnation of the Wicked, but they ſhall be ſo convinc'd of it, as not to be able to charge their Judg with any defect of Mercy, or exceſs of Rigour in his proceedings againſt them. As the Man in the Parable of the Marriage-Feaſt, when taxt for his preſumptuous intruſion without a Wedding Garment, *how cameſt thou in hither?* was ſpeechleſs: ſo they will find no plea for their Juſtification and Defence, but muſt receive the eternal Doom with Silence and Confuſion. Then Conſcience ſhall

revive

revive the bitter remembrance of all the methods of divine Mercy for their Salvation, that were ineffectual by their Contempt and Obstinacy. All the compassionate calls of his Word, with the holy Motions of the Spirit, were like the sowing of Seed in the Stony Ground, that took no root, and never came to perfection. All his terrible Threatnings were but as Thunder to the Deaf, or Lightning to the Blind, that little affects them: the bounty of his Providence design'd *to lead them to Repentance*, had the same effect, as the Showers of Heaven upon Briers and Thorns that makes them grow the faster. And that a Mercy so ready to pardon, did not produce in them a correspondent affection of grateful obedient Love, but by the most unworthy provocations they pluckt down the Vengeance due to obstinate Rebels, will so enrage the Damned against themselves, that they will be less miserable by the Misery they suffer, than by the conviction of their torn Minds, that they were the sole Causes of it. *What Repentings will be kindled within them*, for the stupid neglect of the great Salvation so dearly purchased, and earnestly offered to them? What a fiery addi-

addition to their Torment, that when God was ſo willing to ſave them, they were ſo willful to be Damned. They will never forgive themſelves, that for the ſhort and mean Pleaſures of Senſe, which if enjoyed a thouſand years, cannot recompence the loſs of Heaven, nor requite the pains of Hell for an Hour, they muſt be deprived of the one and ſuffer the other for ever.

4. The Sorrow and Rage will be increaſed by Diſpair: for when the wretched Sinner ſees the Evil is peremptory, and no Outlet of Hope, he abandons himſelf to the violence of Sorrow, and by cruel Thoughts wounds the Heart more, than the fierceſt Furies in Hell can. This Miſery that flows from diſpair ſhall be more fully opened under the diſtinct conſideration of the Eternity of Hell.

And as from Diſpair the condemned Creature turns Enemy to himſelf, ſo to God. 'Tis ſaid of the Worſhippers of the Image of the Beaſt, that *they gnawed their Tongues for Pain, and blaſphemed the God of Heaven becauſe of their Pains.* Rev. 16.10, 11. The Torment and Blaſphemies of thoſe impenitent Idolaters, are a repreſentation of the ſtate of the Damned, where the

the juſt and dreadful Wrath of God upon Men, and the impious Rage of Men againſt God is in the higheſt degrees. For when the guilty Sufferers are ſo weak, that they neither by Patience can ſuſtain their Torments, nor by Strength reſiſt the Power that inflicts them; yet are wicked and ſtubborn; they are irritated by their Miſery, and foam out Blaſphemies againſt the righteous Judg. They hate God with a direct Enmity, and are always under his invincible tormenting Power. Hatred takes pleaſure in Revenge, either real or imaginary. The Damned Wretches were they as Omnipotent to Effect, as they are malicious to Deſire, would dethrone God, and deſtroy his Being. But he is infinitely above the tranſports of their Fury. All their rancorous curſed imprecations, are reflexively pernicious to themſelves; like Arrows ſhot up againſt the Sun, that fall down upon their Heads that ſhot them. Now what more inrages a ſtubborn malicious Spirit, than to be utterly unable to reach and hurt an irreconcileable Enemy, the object of its habitual deteſtation? Briefly, as the bleſſed Spirits are in Heaven, and Heaven is in them,

them, by thoſe holy and joyful Affections that are always exerciſed in the Divine Preſence, ſo the Damned are in Hell, and Hell is in them by thoſe fierce and miſerable Paſſions that continually prey upon them.

4. The Eternity of their Miſery makes it above all other Conſiderations intollerable. Our Saviour repeats it thrice in the ſpace of a few Verſes, to terrify thoſe who ſpare ſome favourite Corruption, *that in Hell their Worm dies not, and the Fire is never quenched.* God will never reverſe his Sentence, and they ſhall never change their State. How willingly would carnal Men raze the Word *Eternal* out of the Scriptures, but to their grief they find it joined with the Felicity of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell. The ſecond Death has all the terrible qualities of the firſt, but not the eaſe and end it brings to Miſery. All the Tears of thoſe forlorn Wretches, ſhall never quench one ſpark of the Fire. Where are the delicious Fair, the Muſick, the Purple, and all the carnal Delights of the rich Man? they are all changed into a contrary ſtate of Miſery, and that ſtate is fixt for ever. From his vaniſhing Paradiſe he

deſcended into an everlaſting Hell. In this the Vengeance of God is infinitely more heavy than the moſt terrible execution from Men. Human Juſtice and Power can inflict but one Death (that will be ſoon diſpatcht) upon a Malefactor worthy to ſuffer a hundred Deaths; if he be condemned to the Fire, they cannot make him live and die together, to burn and not be conſumed: But God will ſo far ſupport the Damned in their Torments, that they ſhall always have Strength to feel, though no Strength to endure them. Thoſe extream Torments which would extinguiſh the preſent Life in a Moment, ſhall be ſuffered for ever. This Conſideration infinitely aggravates the Miſery. For the loſt Soul rackt with the fearful Contemplation of what it muſt ſuffer for ever, feels as it were at once all the Evils that ſhall torment it in its whole duration. The perpetuity of the Miſery is always felt by proviſion. This is as the cruel breaking of the Bones upon the Wheel, when the Soul is tormented by the foreſight of Miſery that without allays ſhall continue in the circulation of Eternal Ages. To make this more ſenſible, let us conſider, that pain makes the Mind obſer-

obſervant of the paſſing of the hours. In Pleaſures, Time with a quick and ſilent motion inſenſibly ſlides away: but in Troubles the Hours are tedious, in violent pains we reckon the minutes as long. 'Tis obſervable how paſſionately the afflicted Pſalmiſt complains, *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Doth his Promiſe fail for evermore? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender Mercies?* In what various pathetic forms does he expreſs the ſame Affection? Though he had aſſurance that the gracious God would not be always ſevere, yet his anguiſh forc'd from him complaints as if the moment of his Trouble were an Eternity. But what ſtrains of Sorrow are among the Damned, who beſides the preſent ſence of their Miſery, have always in their Thoughts the vaſt Eternity wherein they muſt ſuffer it? Pſal. 77. 7.

When three terrible Evils were propounded to *David*'s choice, pining Famine for three years, or bloody War for three Months, or devouring Peſtilence for three days, he choſe the ſhorteſt, though in it ſelf the heavieſt Evil.

Many ſad Days muſt paſs under the other Judgments, where Death by an-

ticipation in ſuch variety of Shapes would be preſented to the Mind, that the lingring expectation of it would afflict more than the ſudden ſtroke: whereas the fury of the Peſtilence would be ſoon over. But the Damned have not this relief, *but ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* How earneſtly *do they ſeek for Death*, but cannot find it? what a favour would they eſteem it to be annihilated? For certainly, if when the Evils in the preſent State are ſo multiplyed, that no Comfort is left, or ſo violent that the afflicted Perſon cannot enjoy them, and refreſh his ſorrowful Spirit, Death is choſen rather than Life, it cannot be imagined that in the future State where the Miſery is extream, and nothing remains to allay it, that the Damned ſhould be in love with the unhappy good of ſimple being, and not chooſe an abſolute extinction if it might be.

If any one ſhould be ſo fooliſh to think that cuſtom will render that State more tolerable, he may find a terrible confutation of his vain Fancy. Indeed continuance under light Evils, may arm the Mind with patience to bear them, but in great extremities it makes the Evil more ponderous

derous and intolerable. He that is tortured with the Stone, or on the Rack, the longer the Torture continues, the leſs able he is to ſuſtain it. In ſhort, as the Joy of Heaven is infinitely more raviſhing, that the Bleſſed are without fear of loſing it; ſo the Miſery of Hell is proportionably tormenting, that the Damned are abſolutely deſtitute of hopes of a releaſe. *O 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, who lives for ever, and can puniſh for ever. Now the ſerious Conſideration of this Miſery, is the moſt proper and powerful means to awaken indulgent Sinners, and make them reſolved *to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right Eye*, to part with the deareſt Luſts rather than be expoſed to it. According to the judgment of Senſe, would any one in his Wits chooſe the enjoyment of the moſt intenſe and exquiſite Pleaſures for a Year, and afterwards be content to burn in a Fornace for a Day, much leſs to enjoy them for a Day, and to burn for a Year? what ſtupid Beaſts are they who for momentary Delights incur the Fiery and Eternal Indignation of God? *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealouſy?* are we ſtronger than he? Try but the Fin-

ger with the Flame of a Candle, or touch but a hot Coal; you will ſoon diſcover your weakneſs. But alas, how hardly are Men induc't to exerciſe their Minds on this terrible Object. He thinks leaſt of Hell, who has moſt reaſon to conſider it: ſo unwilling is the carnal Heart to have repreſented to it the evil to come. Yet this is the firſt Motive that compels Sinners to change their courſe, and turn from Sin to Holineſs, from the Creatures to God. The Joys of Heaven being Spiritual and Divine (as was before obſerved) have no attractive influence upon their Affections, would never convert and reform any, but the torment of Fire being moſt evident and vehement to Senſe, is ſtrongly repreſented by the Imagination, and affects carnal Men. How many abound with vicious obſtinate habits, that by ſolemn and believing thoughts of the unquenchable Fire, have felt the Miracle upon the three Children in the Fornace, renewed in themſelves, their ſtrong Cords burnt aſunder, and all their Powers reſtored to the freedom of Duty, the bleſſed liberty of Obedience. The Truth is, if God had not formed Hell for the Puniſhment of Sin,

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and only prepared the Celeſtial Kingdom for the Reward of Holineſs, the bleſſed Angels would be the ſole Poſſeſſors of it, and Heaven would be as empty of human Souls as 'tis full of Glory: ſo fooliſhly and violently is the corrupt nature of Man drawn by what is pleaſing to Senſe, though with the certain loſs of the moſt precious and eternal good things in the Divine Treaſury. But the belief that within a little time nothing will remain of their ſinful Pleaſures, *but the never dying Worm, and ever living Flames*, makes them conſiderative of their imminent danger, and as it were by neceſſity to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, as a ſecondary Object to eſcape from Hell. As the vertue of the Load-ſtone when encompaſt and arm'd with Iron, is increaſt, and draws a far greater weight than when 'tis ſingle, thus the attractives of Heaven are more powerful to move our obdurate Hearts, when enforc'd from the terrors of Hell. In this reſpect, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom*, of the active and beſt Wiſdom, that directs us in the way to Bleſſedneſs.

CHAP. XIII.

The laſt Direction. Earneſt Prayer to God, to inlighten our Minds to believe the Eternal World, and effectually turn our Wills, to deſire and proſecute the Bleſſedneſs to come.

HAving a diſcovery ſo clear and certain in the Holy Scriptures of the everlaſting recompences in the next World, of the Kingdom of Heaven, (prepared by God to ſhew his excellent Glory to his faithful Servants) where Love and Peace and Joy dwell for ever, and of the infernal Priſon, where deſpair and Rage and Sorrow, and whatever is ſignified under the terrible alluſions of Fire and Brimſtone, are ordained by Divine Juſtice for the Wicked, it might be juſtly hoped, that all Men *would by a holy violence take Heaven, and by the ſwifteſt Motion flee from the Wrath to come.* The inſtinct of Nature and the light of Reaſon excite them to ſecure their moſt precious Intereſt. Can there be an Expectation, Deſire or Capacity in Man of enjoying a Bleſſedneſs beyond what is Infinite and Eternal? And can there be

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any Evil ſo formidable as Everlaſting Miſery? Now both theſe Objects are ſet before Men, and propounded to their Choice. And we are infallibly aſſured from God himſelf, that all who are ſincere and conſtant in their Choice and Purſuit, ſhall obtain Heaven, and that none ſhall be caſt into Hell, but thoſe who chooſe it, and therefore moſt worthily ſuffer it. But, O aſtoniſhment! if with a ſerious Eye we regard the courſe of Mens Actions, 'tis viſible that incomparably the greateſt number of Chriſtians in Profeſſion *love Death, and hate Eternal Life.* Not that 'tis poſſible for the reaſonable Creature to do this directly, with an explicit aim, but virtually and by interpretation. They intend Happineſs, but chooſe Miſery. For he that voluntarily breaks the Law of God, chooſes the known Penalty of its Violation. He that prefers this periſhing World before Heaven, rejects it in the moſt contumelious manner. And ſuch is the depravation of Man ſince his Fall, the Mind being diverted by vain Thoughts, and the Heart prepoſſeſſed with ſenſual Deſires, *that till the Spirit of his Mind be renewed*, and his original Affections to the Supream Good

Good be revived and reſtored by Divine Grace, he is regardleſs of it, and only applies himſelf to what is pleaſing to Senſe. Therefore a moſt neceſſary Duty incumbent upon us, is by humble and fervent Prayer to addreſs our ſelves to God for his Spirit, to enlighten our Minds, that we may believe the reality and greatneſs of the Eternal Reward, and to reform our Wills that we may feel its attractive Force. Both theſe acts of the Spirit are requiſite, that the Love of God, as our chief Felicity, may be the regent Principle of our Hearts and Lives.

1. For this end the Holy Spirit convinces Men thorowly of the reality and greatneſs of an inviſible Happineſs. Indeed the Heathens ſaw ſomething of this as it were in a Dream, they had ſome tranſient Glances, and volatile Wiſhes, concerning it, but miſerably weak and ineffectual. And in the moſt of Chriſtians the convictions of a future State are not ſo clear and ſtrong as to govern their Hearts and Lives. How many of eminent intellectual Faculties are ſtupid as to their great Intereſt, and ſpend themſelves about Trifles, and are equally tractable to Eternal Ruine, as the Ox to the Slaughter? He that is deſtitute of the

the illuminating Grace of the Spirit, *is blind and cannot ſee afar off.* Now by the Analogy between the corporal and the intellectual Faculties, we may underſtand in ſome meaſure how the Mind is illuminated by the Spirit of God. For as to the act of Seeing, two things are requiſite, 1. External Light in the Air, without which the Colours, Figures and Beauties of Objects are not viſible to the ſharpeſt Eye, but lie obſcur'd under impenitrable Darkneſs. 2. Internal Light in the Eye in which the viſive Power conſiſts: if this be extinguiſh'd the cleareſt Light of Heaven is of no uſe for the diſcovery of Things. Thus the Underſtanding is enabled to ſee Spiritual Things. 1. By the revelation of the Object: in this reſpect *Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Goſpel.* Till that bright diſcovery was made of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, it was above the deſires and hopes of ſinful Man. *Cœlum, homo nec optare poterat ex ignorantia, nec ſperare ex propriæ miſeriæ conſcientia.* 2. By the inward inlightning *from the Spirit of Wiſdom,* that removes the Ignorance, Prejudice and Inadvertency of the Mind, which as Scales darkned its Sight, and diſpoſes it to perceive the verity

verity and excellency of ſpiritual and future Things, though not with comprehenſive evidence, yet with that aſſurance, that no doubtfulneſs or ſuſpence remains concerning them. 'Tis obſervable that Faith is expreſt in Scripture, by *Prudence*, *Wiſdom*, *and Knowledg*, whereby a Man knows the grounds and motives of his Judgment and Actions. And Sin is called *Folly*. For as when the underſtanding Faculty, either from the indiſpoſedneſs of the Organs, as in Idiots, or from the diſorder of Fancy by the inflammation of the Humours, as in diſtracted Perſons, cannot weigh and compare, and therefore makes a perverſe judgment of things; ſo the carnal Mind by not due meaſuring and pondering, judges falſly of Spiritual Things. If ſomething no bigger than the Hand were put before the Eye, it would intercept the Sight of the Heavens; and he that not conſidering the properties of things near and diſtant, ſhould conclude that piece to be bigger than the Heavens, were juſtly reputed a Fool. And the Folly of carnal Men is more groſs, who prefer things preſent to Senſe, before what is future and of everlaſting conſequence to the Soul. But there are ſome

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actions which if done by a Natural, would be counted Folly, yet being done by thoſe who in the reputation of the World are Wiſe, are eſteemed Prudent, but they are the moſt deplorable Folly. Now as the reſtoring the *Læſum principium*, the broken Mind to its ſound State, whereby 'tis able to conſider, diſcern and conclude of things according to their Nature, ſuch is the action of God's Spirit upon the corrupt Mind, clarifying and enlightning it, ſo that it receives full conviction by the cleareſt marks of divine Authority ſhining in the Goſpel of the Truth of all the great and precious Promiſes therein contained, and cauſing it by a ſteddy application of the Thoughts to ſee the vaſt difference between what is Temporal, and Eternal, how deſpicably light all the Vanities of this World are found, when put in the Ballance againſt the infinite ineſtimable Happineſs of the next. In ſhort, the renewed Mind knows Spiritual Things according to their Nature and Qualities, believes, eſteems, and determins that they are of Eternal moment, and abſolutely neceſſary for the Happineſs of Man. And as when the natural Faculty of ſeeing is periſh'd, 'tis irreparable by human

human Skill, and without a Miracle can never be reſtored, ſo the intellectual Faculty when darkned by ſinful Luſts, without the renewing power of the Spirit *can never know Spiritual Things as they ought to be known.* Therefore as the blind Men in the Goſpel who diſpair'd of help from the Phyſicians, hearing of the miraculous Power of Chriſt, importunately begg'd his healing Mercy, ſo let us pray to the Light and Saviour of the World, but in a more noble and higher Senſe, *Lord that we may receive our ſight.* Let us with the moſt zealous Affections call upon *the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, that he would give unto us the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the knowledg of him, the Eyes of our underſtanding being inlightned, that we may know what is the hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.*

2. The efficacious Influence of the Holy Spirit is requiſite to change the Will, that with a free and full conſent it may deſire and proſecute the Spiritual Eternal Good. Without this, the conviction of the Mind is not powerful enough to convert the Soul from the love of the World, to chooſe Heaven. There

There may be an inlightned Conſcience, without a renewed Heart. Though the Judgment aſſents that God is the Supream Good, *yet till the Heart be circumciſed*, the ſenſuality of the Affections taken away, divine Love that directs the Life to God as our bleſſed End, can never poſſeſs it. Suppoſe that Men had a ſenſible and ſtrong aſſurance of the Eternal State hereafter, if all thoſe who lived godly in a viſible manner aſcended with *Elias* to Heaven, and if all who continued in their Sins viſibly deſcended into Hell, as *Corah* and his Company were ſwallowed up alive by the Earth, before the *Iſraelites*, if Men could hear the joyful Exultations of the Saints above, their high Praiſes of God, and hear the deſperate Crys and deep Complaints of the Damned: if one according to the deſire of the rich Man were ſent from Hell, and with his Fiery Tongue ſhould preach a Sermon of thoſe Torments, not deſcribing them at a diſtance, but by a ſenſible demonſtration in himſelf, yet this alone were not ſufficient to draw off their Hearts from the deceitful Happineſs of this World, and faſten them on the perfect and Eternal Happineſs in the next.

next. Indeed they could not then indulge their Luſts ſo ſecurely, but they *would be Strangers to the Life of God*, ſuch an inveterate alienation of Heart is in Men from real Holineſs. Till the ſanctifying Spirit by a directive perſuaſive Light that repreſents the Truth and Goodneſs of Spiritual Things, transforms the Soul, and makes it Spiritual in its Valuations and Affections, 'tis inwardly averſe from Grace and Glory. *The Lord direct our Hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Chriſt, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.*

FINIS.